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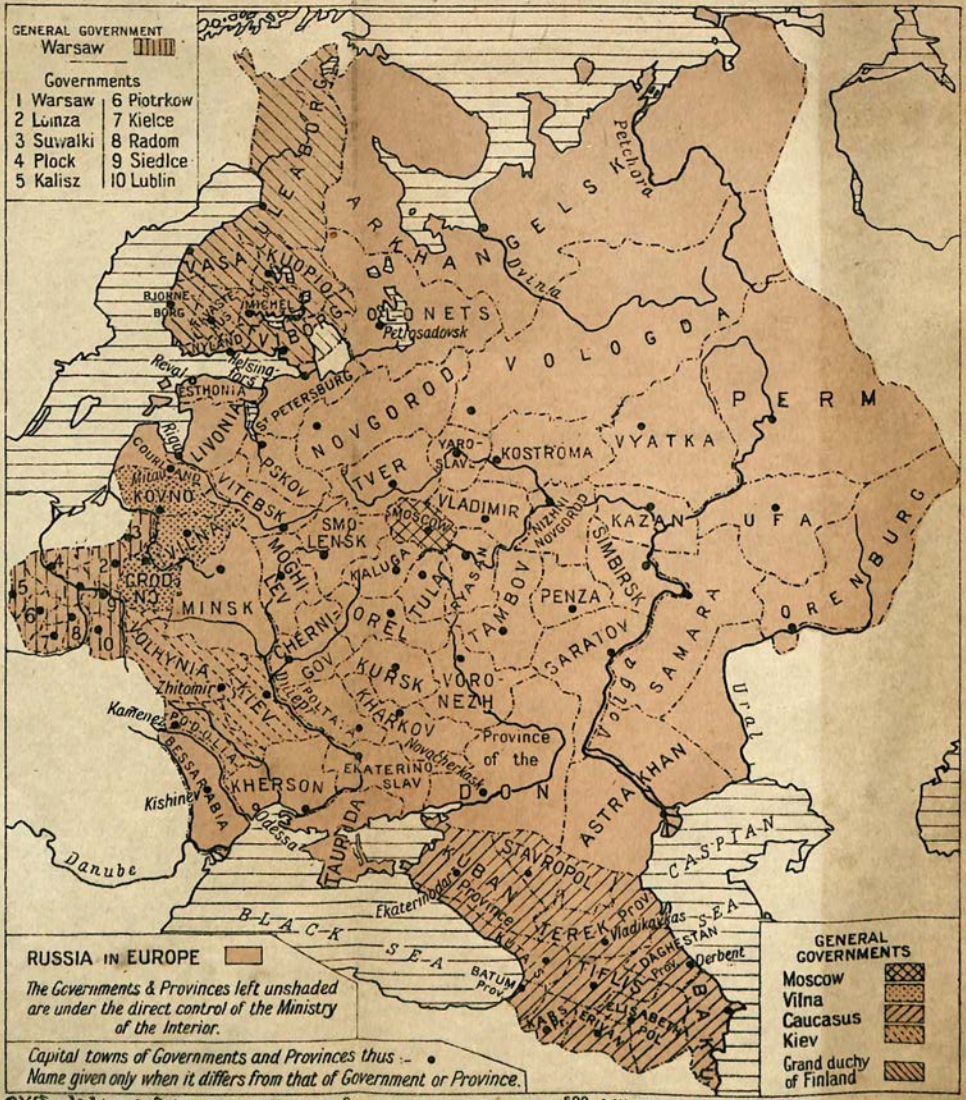
THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A YEAR IN RUSSIA
RUSSIAN ESSAYS
LANDMARKS IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

RUSSIA IN EUROPE. Political Divisions.



G.Y. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911

THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

BY

MAURICE BARING

31704

WITH FOUR MAPS

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DEDICATED

TO

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON

PREFACE

WHEN the average man, in search of information on a subject which he knows little or nothing of, has recourse to the best-known authorities, his enthusiasm will often be damped by finding that the authors have taken for granted a certain foundation of elementary knowledge on his part, which he lacks. He finds himself at sea; he is met at every turn by allusions to things which he is supposed to know, and which he is ignorant of. The authors he has consulted have not thought it worth while to repeat what they suppose any one interested in the subject is bound to know. Thus the student sometimes finds himself in the position of a foreigner to whom an Englishman talks of the game of cricket under the impression that he is talking to a fellow Englishman. Hopelessly puzzled, he will abandon his study of this particular subject and turn his attention to other things. This is especially true with regard to the study of Russian affairs. The authorities as a rule know so much more than the people who are likely to consult them that the student is confused and baffled. If he reads books dealing with Russian commerce, politics, administration, or literature, he will often find that a certain minimum knowledge of Russian history is taken for granted. Now, it is just this knowledge that he lacks. If, on the other hand, he takes up a volume of Russian history, he will often come across allusions to Russian life and literature which mean nothing to him.

I am far from blaming writers of such books for not supplying the lack. A man who writes a book for the serious students of a subject, say the game of cricket, must necessarily assume that the student will be already aware that the game is played with a

bat and a ball, out of doors, and not at a card table. He will assume that the student has mastered the rudiments of the subject, and he will have neither leisure nor space, if he wishes to impart the results of special study, to be perpetually recapitulating. On the other hand, students of Russian affairs in England have been, up to the present day, comparatively few, and those who have been in a position to expound Russian life have nearly always addressed themselves to the student and not to the general reader. The general reader, the average man, has been obliged to fill up the gap by studying popular books ; and popular books on Russia have suffered from the fault of being written either by people who were ignorant of the subject, or, still worse, by writers with a strong political or racial bias ; or again, simply by sensation-mongers, to whom Russia, a large, far-off, and comparatively unknown country, has proved a rich field for exploitation. The result has been not only that the knowledge of Russia in England is restricted, but the dissemination of glaringly false and absurd legends about it has been immense. It is needless to say that the average man is far more likely to swallow and assimilate the facile sensationalism of certain lurid impressionists, than to study the serious, well-built, and accurate works of the classic writers on Russia, such as Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, M. Leroy-Beaulieu, Professor Morfill, or Professor Pares.

My object in writing this book is to supply the average reader with an introduction to the course of Russian affairs ; to supply him with a rough idea of those things which, it is generally assumed, the student will have found out for himself. I wish to sketch as simply and as briefly as possible the main features of the Russian soil and race ; the main episodes of the history and development of the nation ; to point out the chief characteristics of the country and its people ; and to trace the manner in which its chief institutions grew up and developed : in fact, to put before the reader the chief landmarks in the story of the Russian people. I am well aware of the immense difficulty of the task, and I am fully conscious that the result cannot fail to be superficial and full of shortcomings. But I believe that an introductory

guide of this kind, however imperfect it may be, cannot fail to fill a certain gap, and be of some definite use as a stepping-stone to more special knowledge and a wider research. Although I cannot vie in research and erudition with my predecessors and fellow-workers in the same field, to whom I am deeply indebted, I can at least claim that knowledge which arises from sympathy with the people whose story, characteristics, and significance I will endeavour to indicate.

There is a Russian proverb which says, " If you love me, love mine " ; that is to say, If you love me, love the things that I love. In the history of Russian literature it is certainly true that it is those authors who have followed this advice who have got nearest to the Russian people, and been the best interpreters of their feelings. The last thing the Russian peasant wants is pity ; he wishes for his ideals to be respected and shared : that is why men like Pushkin and Dostoievski, who believed in the Russian people, who recognized their ideals and found that they were good, were in closer touch with the people than a whole generation of Intellectuals (Nihilists and others) who went among the people to spread propaganda. All the experience that I have had in Russia myself has led me to believe that Pushkin and Dostoievski were right in believing in the qualities and in the ideals of the Russian people. When I say " people " I mean the common people, the great majority of the population. I not only believe in their qualities but in their future. When one casts a bird's-eye glance over Russian history, from the early days when Russia consisted of a series of small appanages grouped round Kiev, and surrounded by hostile races, and when one passes in review the main episodes of the story of the people—the Tartar yoke unto which they submitted ; how Moscow, from being the smallest of many principalities, and surrounded on all sides by formidable enemies, gradually emerged from obscurity into predominance ; how no sooner had Moscow, that is to say Russia, attained a predominant position and shaken off the yoke of the Tartars than it seemed to collapse from within, to be about to fall to pieces, in anarchy, and to succumb once and for all to its more cultivated and powerful rival, Poland ; how at the very moment when this

final surrender seemed inevitable, a butcher and a prince expelled the foreign enemy and hoisted once more the banner of the national ideal—when we consider all this, the story of Russia reads like that fairy tale which is the symbol of all other fairy tales, and contains the whole morality of fairyland, namely, that the weaker gets the better of the strong. Among all Russian fairy tales, the most popular is that one which tells that there were once three brothers; the two elder were strong, mighty, and capable, but the third was a fool, and his name was Ivan Durak. But it is the third brother, the foolish Ivan, and not his capable brothers, who inherits the kingdom. Not only does the whole of Russian literature, from the earliest epical songs down to the stories of Maxim Gorki, seem to me to be contained in the story of Ivan Durak, but the story is also a symbolic rendering of the whole history of Russia. Russia was the youngest son among the Slav races, the feeblest and the most insignificant. Not only this, the hordes of the East came down and took the boy prisoner just as he was beginning to learn to read and write, and kept him in a dungeon for years. But in durance he grew conscious of his own self, and after a time he escaped from the prison and turned on his gaolers and expelled them. But no sooner was he released from prison than new misfortunes overtook him: his plot of land was devastated, his barns burned, and his eldest brother, who was strong and powerful, marched into his home and took possession of it, saying, "It is quite clear, little fool, that you do not know how to manage your own affairs; they must be managed for you!" It was then something arose in the breast of Ivan the Fool, which caused him to say, "I shall manage my own affairs myself"; and with the help of the children in his village, he drove his eldest brother from his home. His eldest brother was so powerful and so proud that he did not believe he could ever be beaten, although everything was not in good order in his own house. He was surrounded by wise counsellors and good stewards, who told him that if he did not put his house in order, evil would surely come of it; but he paid no heed to them. Years went by, and although he seemed to the world to be just as powerful

as ever, the foundations of his power had been sapped and were rotten.

In the meantime Ivan the Fool had made gigantic efforts to improve his position, to put his house in order, to teach his servants new knowledge, to transform the life round him. When he began to do this, people had laughed at him, and had said that it was impossible; others had grumbled, and had put every obstacle they could in the way of the change; but Ivan Durak persevered in spite of laughter and ill-will, and he succeeded in putting his house in order, and in training his servants. His servants in time became so strong and so powerful that when they saw that everything in the house of the elder brother was at sixes and at sevens, and that his folk were divided each against the other, they marched into the land of the elder brother and took his house and gave it to Ivan the Fool. The weakest had won.[1]

Such, in brief, is the story of Russia, and the paradox holds good with regard to Russia to this day: Russia is still the strongest because she is the weakest. It is that which explains why Russia rules over Poland, Finland, Siberia, and the Caucasus, although the Poles were civilized long before the Russians, and the Finns have outstripped them in certain forms of progress.

I have endeavoured in this book to sketch as clearly as possible the main episodes of the story of the true growth of Russia, and to trace the sequence of its most important events. For the history of early Russia I have largely drawn on Professor Kluchevski's *Course of Lectures on Russian History*," delivered at the Moscow University in 1882–3, the fourth volume of which was published in 1910, and whose fifth volume has not yet appeared—which is by far the most interesting and suggestive of modern Russian historical works.[2] I have also freely used S. Soloviev's monumental history of Russia, and I have consulted many other Russian authorities on separate periods and episodes.

[1] Of course, since in the world things do not stop short as they do in fairy tales, the sequel may have a totally different character; but we are dealing with the past and with the present, and not with the future. For all we know another story may have begun, or be on the verge of beginning, in which Russia will be the Giant, and Poland or some other country, Jack.

[2] An English translation is to be issued by Messrs. Dent.

It is perhaps needless to give a list of those authorities which cannot be obtained in English translations. I have also made use of Brückner's *Peter the Great* and *Catherine II;* and besides the help derived from such well-known classics as M. Leroy-Beaulieu's history, *L'Empire des Tsars*, Rambaud's history of Russia, and Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's *Russia*, I am indebted to a multitude of other writers, such as Prince Volkonski, Professor Miliukov, Professor Kovalevski, Professor Pares, Professor Morfill, and Sir Charles Eliot.

There has lately been published by Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode a book called *The Russian Year Book*, by Dr. Howard P. Kennard. The book does for Russia more or less what the *Statesman's Year Book* does for England; it is the first time a book of this kind has ever appeared, and it contains in portable form a vast amount of information. The reader will find in it, besides a multitude of statistics with regard to commercial and financial matters, a concise and accurate account of the more important Russian institutions, and of the manner in which the country is governed. It really contains in a nutshell all the main facts with regard to the Russian country. I have used this book to verify any figures which I have found it necessary to give for the purposes of illustration. I have called attention to other authorities consulted, in my footnotes during the course of the book.

The chapter on the negative aspect of the Russian Revolution appeared originally in the *Dublin Review*. My thanks are due to the editor for his kindness in allowing me to reprint it here.

My thanks are due to many Russian friends, especially to certain members of the Morshansk *Zemstvo*, who looked through the book in MSS., and checked every word I have written on the agrarian question; and to Professor Pares and to Mr. Desmond McCarthy, who kindly read the proofs for me.

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CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

OF SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTS IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

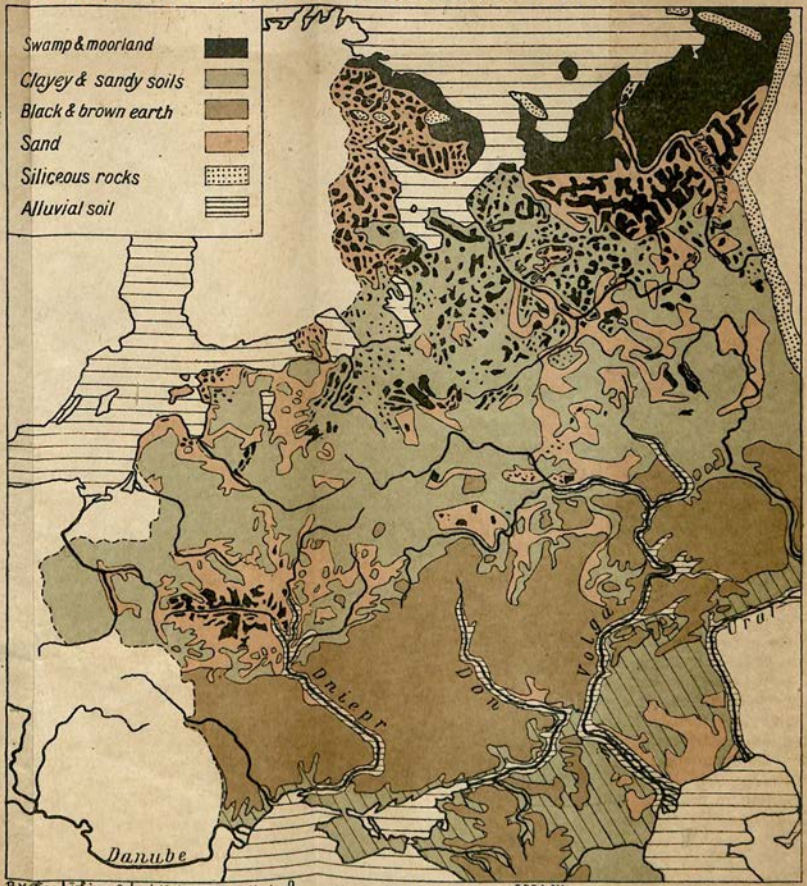
862. The beginning of Russia.
882. Oleg occupies Kiev.
912. Oleg's Treaty with Byzantium.
957. Baptism of Princess Olga.
988. Russia Converted to Christianity.
1015. Death of Vladimir.
1054. Death of Yaroslav.
1061. First Code of Russian Láw drawn up.
1169. Sack of Kiev by Prince Andrew.
1240. Destruction of Kiev by the Tartars.
1244. Invasion of the Tartars.
1328. Moscow becomes a city.
1341. Death of Ivan I, Kalita.
1380. Tartars defeated at the Battle of Kulikovo.
1439. Council of Florence: Catholic and Orthodox Eastern Church temporarily reunited.
1462. Accession of Ivan III.
1472. Ivan III marries Sophia Palæologa.
1505. Death of Ivan III.
1547. Ivan the Terrible crowned at Moscow.
1550. Judicial Code drawn up by Ivan the Terrible.
1552. Fall of Kazan.
1556. Fall of Astrakhan.
1564. First book printed in Russia.
1584. Death of Ivan the Terrible.
1584. Conquest of Siberia.
1591. Murder of Tsarevich Dimitri.
1597. First laws made with the result of binding the peasant to the soil, by Boris Godunov.
1598. Accession of Boris Godunov.
1604. Appearance of Dimitri, the first Pretender.
1605. Death of Boris Godunov.
1605. Dimitri the Pretender crowned at Moscow.
1606. Dimitri the Pretender murdered.
1608. Appearance of the second Pretender.

1611. Poles take Moscow and occupy the Kremlin.
1612. Poles driven from Moscow by Minin and Pozharski.
1613. Michael Feodorovich Romanov elected Tsar.
1645. Death of Michael Romanov.
1649. New Code of Laws regulating the position of the peasants, and binding the peasant to the soil, drawn up by the Tsar Alexis (the Ulozhenie).
1652. Nikon the Patriarch.
1655. Revision of the Liturgical Texts.
1660. Schism in the Russian Church.
1672. Birth of Peter the Great.
1674. Introduction of the Ballet into Russia.
1676. Death of the Tsar Alexis.
1682. Death of the Tsar Feodor.
1689. Peter the Great takes the reins of government into his own hands.
1695. Campaign of Azov.
1697–8. Peter's first journey abroad.
1700. Battle of Narva: Peter the Great defeated by the Swedes.
1700. Change in the Calendar. The beginning of the year transferred from December to January.
1703. Foundation of St. Petersburg.
1703. First Russian newspaper appears.
1706. Charles XII, King of Sweden, invades Russia.
1709. Battle of Poltava.
1711. Institution of the Senate.
1716. Military conscription introduced.
1717. Peter the Great's second journey abroad.
1718. Death of Tsarevich Alexis.
1721. Peace of Nystadt with the Swedes.
1725. Death of Peter the Great.
1725. Foundation of the Academy of Science.
1727. Death of Catherine I.
1730. Death of Peter II.
1740. Death of the Empress Anne.
1741. Accession of the Empress Elizabeth.
1744. Capital punishment abolished by the Empress Elizabeth.
1754. Establishment of the Bank of the nobility.
1755. Foundation of the University of Moscow.
1761. Death of the Empress Elizabeth.
1762. Compulsory service for the hereditary nobility abolished.
1762. Accession of Catherine the Great.
1765. Death of Lomonossov.
1772. First partition of *Poland*.
1773. Pugachev comes forward as *Pretender*.
1783. Annexation of *the Crimea*.
1785. Charter given to *the Nobility*.
1793. Second partition of *Poland*.
1795. Third partition of *Poland*.
1796. Death of Catherine the Great.
1799. Italian Campaign of Suvorov.
1801. Death of Paul I.
1812. Invasion of Russia by the French.

1818. *History of the Russian State*, by Karamzin, published.
1819. University of St. Petersburg opened.
1820. Pushkin's first poems published.
1823. *Evgenie Oniegin* published by Pushkin.
1825. Death of Alexander I.
1825. Decembrists Revolution.
1831. Polish Insurrection.
1833. University of Kiev opened.
1835. Gogol's play, *The Inspector*, produced.
1837. Death of Pushkin.
1841. Death of Lermontov.
1842. Publication of *Dead Souls*, by Gogol.
1847. Publication of *Sportsman's Sketches*, by Turgeniev.
1853–6. Crimean War.
1855. Death of Nicolas I.
1860. Publication of *Fathers and Sons*, by Turgeniev.
1861. Emancipation of the serfs.
1864. Provincial self-government instituted.
1864. Judicial Code of Emperor Alexander II.
1866. Publication of *Crime and Punishment*, by Dostoievski.
1869. Death of Herzen.
1872. Publication of *War and Peace*, by Count Tolstoi.
1877–8. War with Turkey.
1881. Death of Dostoievski.
1881. Alexander I assassinated.
1883. Death of Turgeniev.
1888. Siberian University opened at Tomsk
1894. Death of Alexander III.
1904. Russo-Japanese War.
1905. Manifesto issued by the Emperor granting representative government.
1906. First Duma assembles, 10th.
1906. First Duma dissolved, July.
1907. Second Duma convoked (March), and dissolved (April).
1907. Third Duma convoked (October).
1910. Agrarian Law passed, introducing principle of small holdings among the peasantry.

EUROPEAN RUSSIA. Distribution of Soils

Note. The clayey & Sandy Soils of the Southern Steppe are distinguished thus \\\\.



THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

CHAPTER I

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CLIMATE

IN writing about a country which one is familiar with for those who are unfamiliar with it, there is nothing one is more tempted to take for granted than its physical features and its climate. On the other hand, there is nothing which the writer has less the right to assume than this particular branch of knowledge; nothing which so imperatively needs making clear to the reader at the very outset.

I will assume, therefore, on the part of the reader the vague haze which is the result, as far as foreign countries are concerned, of a liberal education; and I crave the forgiveness of those readers to whom I may be merely repeating facts which they have known since their childhood.

A glance at the map will tell one that European Russia is a continuation of the central European plain: an immense mass of dry land which stretches from the Baltic Sea and the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. In the west, there is no sharp boundary dividing Russia from Western Europe, and in the east, the Ural Mountains form an arbitrary frontier line between European and Asiatic Russia; the country beyond this range is still the continuation of the central European plain and it has the same characteristics.

The chief difference between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, that is to say Russia, owing to which the latter forms so striking a contrast to the former, is the continental character of Russia: the distance which separates it from the Atlantic,

the negligible part which the sea plays in regard to it, the slender influence which the sea exercised on its history and its development: all of which things come from its lack of an indented coast-line, and from the unity and immensity of the country.

The two cardinal facts about Russia are that it is an immense country and a continental country.

One may perhaps assume general knowledge with regard to its immensity—although it is doubtful whether it is universally realized that the area of the whole Russian Empire exceeds eight million square miles (394,462 sq. geographical miles), and that European Russia has an area of more than two million square miles (100,468 sq. geographical miles); that is to say, that European Russia is ten times as big as France, and sixteen times as big as the United Kingdom; that the Russian Empire has a population of 124,640,000, and European Russia one of ninety-two millions.

The fact may be universally known, but I know from experience that it is frequently lost sight of; for one often hears people inferring, from what may or may not have happened in a tiny fleck of this vast country, that the same thing is happening all over it. It does not follow, for instance, that because there is cholera in St. Petersburg, there must necessarily be cholera in Moscow or Kiev, or that because certain things are happening in the Baltic provinces, the same things are happening in Tambov, Odessa, or Irkutsk. It has nevertheless been frequently my lot to come across deductions of this kind.

Apart from its size, and its lack of an indented sea-coast, the chief physical characteristic of Russia is the uniformity of its surface; and in this respect also, it offers a sharp contrast to Western Europe, whose chief characteristics are its indented seaboard and the variety of its physical features.

In Russia the sea-board is limited. The coast-line is small in proportion to the area, the proportion being exactly one mile of sea coast to forty-one square miles of continent. As regards uniformity, Russia consists almost entirely of a plain, which extends from the mountains of Scandinavia and the Carpathian Mountains, in the west, to the Ural Mountains in the east, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea, the mountains of the Crimea, and the Caucasus in the south. The surface

of the plain is, at rare intervals, varied by clefts and chasms in it, which give the false air of a valley to such parts of the country where they occur; while the tablelands and elevations never rise to a height exceeding from 300 to 1100 feet above the sea-level.

Geographically and geologically, this immense level mass of land is Asiatic rather than European. Historically, Russia belongs to Europe, and although geographically Russia is not altogether European, it would be wrong to call Russia entirely Asiatic, even geographically, because the difference in the physical conditions of Russia and Asia is as sharp as the difference between Russia and Western Europe.

Geographically, Russia is a half-way house between Europe and Asia. Russia was predestined by its situation to attract the East to itself, and to act as a buffer between Europe and Oriental invasion. The attraction was mutual, and Russia was in its turn attracted by the Orient and expanded eastwards. The uniformity of Russia, arising from the absence of its sea-coast, is the key to the history of the Russian nation and to the character of the Russian people.

In the first place, the absence of sea-board prevented the progress of the West reaching Russia by the sea. The expansion of Russia took place on land, and not by sea. Russia expanded through Siberia to the Pacific Ocean. The continental territory of European and Asiatic Russia lent itself to expansion, and facilitated it all the more, in that Russia did not have to compete, either in peace or in war, with the countries of Europe. But the uniformity, the absence of sharp features of variety, of great mountain ranges running from north to south, or from east to west, giving a sameness of climate to places widely apart, the monotony of landscape, and of physical characteristics, had another effect beside that of facilitating indefinite expansion by land. It exercised a direct influence on the character of the people.

The physical features of Russia take the shape of broad zones, gradually merging one into the other. The chequered areas of Western Europe, which are like mosaic, are unknown in Russia.

In Western Europe, the landscape may vary from hour to hour, but you may travel for days in Russia without a change. And the life of the people and the cultivation of the land is as monotonous as the landscape. The result is that in Russia

the desire for change of intercourse was never kindled. There was no give and take between mountain and valley, as in Western Europe, because there was no mountain and no valley. Since nature, landscape, and the manner of life were more or less the same everywhere, the feelings and manner of speech of the people were naturally the same also. In Western Europe, if a man travelled from one part of the country to another, he received a whole series of fresh impressions, he was aware of sharp contrasts; if he went from the mountain to the valley, or from one province to another, he might find, in less than a day's journey, and in his immediate neighbourhood, a totally different manner of life; unfamiliar clothes, bewildering customs, and a strange dialect. But in Russia he could travel for miles and miles and for days and days, and find the language unmodified by a single intonation; he found the same landscape, the same manners and customs, the same houses, the same animals and the same life.

But in Western Europe, the variety of the landscape, the sharp contrasts of the physical features of the country, made travel more difficult. A mountain means an obstacle. A country as chequered as a mosaic, and full of elevations and depressions, means a country in which communication is difficult. So in Russia, the absence of this mosaic quality, and of those obstacles which are factors in the economic and intellectual development of a country, was favourable, on the other hand, to the expansion, the emigration, and the spread of the population. There were no obstacles in the way of emigration. A Russian who emigrated from his home to a distant part of the country, found exactly the same surroundings, circumstances, and manner of life as those which he had left behind. He could therefore adapt himself with the greatest of ease to his changed surroundings, wherever he went. In Russia the result of this was an impulse towards emigration and expansion. This is the cardinal fact of Russian history.

In countries where the physical features are varied and sharply contrasted, discontent or hunger stimulate the population to find a new means of making their living, and of bettering their condition, on the spot, since it is difficult to go away; but in Russia, any such impulse had only one outlet, namely, emigration. And the result of emigration is that culture is extended, but not increased. It is spread over a larger space, but spread thinly, instead of being thicker and deeper in one particular

spot. Civilization, therefore, in Russia was constantly being extended in a thin layer, and it thickened much more slowly than in the countries of Western Europe. The history of Russia is the history of the civilization of the Eastern European plain. Russia is therefore a country of colonists.

In countries where the physical features are characterized by a sameness, the nature of the soil is important. In Russia, as has already been said, it takes the shape of zones. Roughly speaking, Russia can be divided into two large regions: the region of the woods, and the region of the plains; the woods extend from the north to the centre of Russia, and the plains from the centre to the south. Such a division would have been quite accurate in ancient times, before the forests of Russia yielded to the inroads of civilization and of progress; but now it is only roughly approximate. Corresponding but not coinciding with these two botanical regions, there are two regions of soil. In the north, there is a zone of clayey and sandy soil, and in the centre and south, a zone of black earth which gradually grows thinner until it ends in arid steppes of unmitigated sand.

The vegetation which covers these broad zones is as monotonous, and as gradual in its variation, as the soil and the landscape. The extreme north of Russia is occupied by a belt of marshes; no trees grow here, because the temperature rises above freezing point during a few months of the year only. No agriculture and no cattle-breeding is possible here; the elk is the only beast which affords a means of subsistence for the scanty population.

The woods of the northern part of the wooded zone are unlike the woods of Central Europe, and have nothing in common, for instance, with the well-drilled forests of Germany. Young trees grow amongst old trees; the undergrowth is wild and dense; and the dry climate and the ungrateful soil necessitate a slow growth, and prevent the trees from attaining high dimensions. Wind and fire act destructively, and man also, who cuts down the finest trees for timber.

The wooded zone can be divided into sections; the whole of it is bounded to the south, roughly speaking, by the sixtieth parallel in the west and the fifty-fifth parallel in the east. In the northern part of the wooded zone only trees of the fir tribe grow, and in some places the aspen and the birch, not only

as isolated exceptions among the fir trees, but in larger groups. Agriculture is practically impossible. The vegetation is a great deal more various in the southern portion of the zone of woods. Here there are the oak, the lime tree, the birch, the maple, the elm, the ash, and the elder. The beech tree cannot stand the climate of Russia.[1] Agriculture is difficult here, but possible. And man has to make a gigantic effort in order to keep even with nature.

In the north of the wooded zone, the inhabitants earn their living by trading in timber and in tar; but in the southern portion of the wooded zone, agriculture still occupies a secondary place. Fields are obtained by making clearings in the woods, and when they cease to be productive, the peasants leave them, and literally, in fresh woods, seek pastures new. Barley, cabbages, and turnips are grown in the north, and in the south, rye and oats. The pastures here are more profitable than the fields, and in the Government of Archangel, for instance, there is extensive breeding of horned cattle. It is only a little to the south of the sixtieth parallel that agriculture takes the place of the timber trade.

Roughly speaking, then, there is in the north a zone of clayey and of sandy soil which is densely wooded, and in which there are lakes, marshes, and some fields, but few human settlements. This zone, as it descends towards the centre, becomes less and less densely wooded, and contains an increasing number of clearings made by the hand of man, and becomes more and more plentiful in human settlements.

In the centre, there is a zone of black soil which is entirely cultivated. The wooded region merges into the northern part of it, and overlaps it; and in addition to the fringes of the wooded zone, which descend into it, there are islands of woods throughout the zone; so that about one quarter of its surface is wooded.

Beneath this zone of black earth, stretching southwards, begin the Steppes, which reach from the zone of black earth to the Black Sea. The soil of the Steppes consists also of black earth, which grows thinner as the Steppes extend southwards. The Steppes are not entirely devoid of woods, but the woods which form dense islands in the central zone, become, in the Steppes, small and isolated groups, growing beside rivers or in such places as are likely to foster the growth of trees.

[1] There are beeches in the Crimea and in Poland, but not in Russia proper.

Three-quarters of the northern area of the Steppes are cultivated, but as they extend southward, the black earth becomes thinner and thinner, until it ends by being too thin for cultivation.

There is no absolute or hard-and-fast line where the wooded zone ends and the Steppes begin. The woods grow rarer towards the centre, and break up into islands, but are still numerous and dense; and in the south they become more and more isolated. The zone of uninterrupted dense woods which originally existed in Russia has given way before the work of man and the progress of agriculture.

The zone of black earth which I have mentioned, is an extremely important factor in the part Russia plays among the nations of the world. It derives the name *Chernoziom*, or black earth, from a layer of black humus, or leaf-mould, of a thickness ranging from about eighteen inches to four and a half feet; it consists chiefly of marl and a lesser proportion of clay mixed with organic matter. It dries rapidly, and becomes, when it is dry, a fine dust; it absorbs moisture with equal rapidity. In rainy weather it changes into a thick black paste.

It is said to be the result geologically of the slow decomposition of the grasses of the Steppe. The *chernoziom*, or black earth, is extraordinarily rich, and the region where it is cultivated is one of the great corn supplies of the world.

The Steppes proper, which stretch from the *Chernoziom* to the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, and which contain the lower basin of the Dniester, the Bug, and the Don, are, as I have already said, fertile to the north and arid to the south, and consist of black earth. In the spring they change into a measureless ocean of grasses, flowers, and plants; the grasses sometimes reach a height of six feet. The flowering of the Steppes is as rapid as it is rich; by July they are burnt up, and nothing but a dry pampas remains. The dry-cut grasses provide fodder for the cattle for the rest of the year. In winter they are covered with snow.

The Steppes are the home of the Cossacks and of Mazeppa, the seat and source of many legends, and the nest of a rich poetic tradition. For a description of them, as they used to be, I would refer the reader to Gogol's *Taras Bulba;* but now their character is rapidly changing, because they are losing their wildness in proportion as agriculture increases and extends.

To the south and to the east of these fertile Steppes, the arid

Steppes begin. They are entirely desert; the black humus disappears, leaving nothing but sand or soil impregnated with salt.

Almost the whole of the lower course of the Volga, from Tsaritsin to Astrakan and the Caspian Sea, falls in this region. To the north-east of the Caspian Sea, a desert of rock and sand begins, which stretches right into Asia and Turkestan. This Ural-Caspian Steppe is the driest and the barest region of European Russia. The north of the Crimea is equally desert and bare. It is inhabited by nomad tribes.

In the region extending from the sixtieth parallel to a line running through Nizhni-Novgorod, Zhitomir, and Tula, the climate is more temperate; agriculture is possible everywhere. Corn is grown, rye and oats, barley and wheat, as well as flax and cabbages. In Northern Central Russia buckwheat is largely grown, as well as cabbages, but agriculture is still difficult until we come to the belt of black earth.

The black earth district is not a zone formed by two regular parallel lines; but it includes the whole of the cultivated plains of the south, and it stretches from the Governments of Orel, Kharkov, and Kursk, in a north-easterly direction towards the Volga. In the western part of it the climate is milder, and agriculture is more advanced; a great deal of wheat is grown, and beetroot. West of the Dnieper there are fruit trees and vines. This is the district of potteries, sugar factories, beer breweries, and flour-mills. In the east, in that part of the black-earth belt which belongs to Great Russia, agriculture is not quite so advanced. The land which belongs to the landowners is well cultivated, but in the land of the peasants the cultivation is superficial. Nevertheless, the whole of the black-soil belt produces a very large quantity of corn for export.

Another important factor in the physical surface of Russia, which is likewise a result of its immensity, is the peculiar nature of its river system.

I have already alluded to the presence of slight elevations and clefts which vary the rolling surface of the plain of Russia. The elevations, which are isolated in the interior of the country, take the shape of slight tablelands, and at times they form a series of small hills, which never in any case are more than 1100 feet above the sea-level. They run parallel with the longitude rather than with the latitude. Such is, for instance, the

central Russian elevation, which starts in the Valdai Hills, and stretches in an almost perpendicular line for over seven hundred miles to the Government of Kharkov, and ends in the basin of the Don.

Such elevations in the surface of Russia are separated from one another by depressions, and they form, with their spurs and offshoots, the watersheds of the most important river basins of Central and Southern Russia. The rivers are fed by a multitude of lakes and marshes, which, although they are gradually being drained, are still extremely numerous. In the Governments of Novgorod, St. Petersburg, and Pskov, for instance, the marshes alone, without counting the lakes, occupy an area of seven million acres; the marshes act as reservoirs to the lakes when the latter grow dry; and as the surface of the country is flat, and the soil porous, they can find an outlet anywhere, and take any direction they please.

The river system of Russia is consequently the most complicated in Europe; the rivers and their numerous tributaries form a closely woven network which covers the whole country. Nearly all the Russian rivers have their sources in lakes and marshes.

The great rivers of European Russia, the Volga, the Dnieper, and the Western Dwina, have their sources at the foot of the Valdai Hills and in the lakes which lie between them. The Volga is the greatest river in Europe, and the other Russian rivers exceed both in their length, and in their river basins, all the rivers of Western Europe, with the exception of the Danube. Besides their length, the rivers are remarkable for the great number of their tributaries, the tortuous and serpentine nature of their course, and the sluggishness of their streams. The Russian rivers are sluggish because of the low elevation of their sources, which precludes a strong current; they are serpentine, owing to the flat and porous nature of the soil, which allows the waters to wander at their will. The Volga, for instance, is about 2230 miles long, but the distance from its source to its mouth, as the crow flies, is only 1043 miles. The river basins are consequently immense. That of the Volga occupies an area of over 500,000 square miles.

The Dnieper is the only river which in flowing over the Southern Russian ridges has rapids and falls. The waterfalls of the Dnieper played an important part in Russian history, for the islands which

they separate from the mainland, formed the nest and home of the Cossacks. The rivers are generally navigable not far from their sources, and they are connected amongst themselves by tributaries and canals, so that it is easy to pass from one river to another.[1]

The drawback of the rivers is that they none of them flow into an important sea. The Arctic Ocean and the White Sea, into which the Pechora and the Northern Dwina flow, are frozen during the greater part of the year, and the Volga flows into the Caspian Sea; so that the Russian rivers are only serviceable for the internal trade of the country.

Another peculiarity of the Russian rivers, which has no parallel in Western Europe, is the annual floods. In the spring, when the snows melt, the rivers overflow their banks, and the small rivers are transformed into great sheets of water, and the meadows are flooded. The spring floods of Russia have nothing in common with the unexpected and destructive floods of the more rapid rivers of Western Europe. They occur as regularly as clockwork. They stimulate navigation and trade, and they are beneficial to the meadows and pastures and to the cultivation of vegetables.

Let us now consider the Russian climate. The chief determining factor of the Russian climate is that it belongs to the temperate zone, and chiefly to its northern, subarctic section. The extreme north of Russia is in the Arctic zone. Russia is almost divided in the centre by the fifty-fifth parallel, which runs through Tilsit. The Crimea is intersected by the forty-fifth parallel, which runs through Bordeaux and North Italy. The second factor is its distance from the ocean. Russia is a continental country—and the climate is continental. Just as the main feature of the physical appearance of Russia is its uniformity, and its monotony, so it is with the climate. Given the large distance from the Gulf of Finland to the Crimea and the Caucasus, one would expect to find sharp differences of climate. But this is not so. It is true that you will find in the extremities of the Russian Empire—in Finland, the Crimea, and the Caucasus—examples of every kind of climate, but such extremities cannot be regarded as belonging to Russia proper. They are the annexes

[1] The great waterway of ten centuries back,—Neva, Volkov, Lovat, Dwina, and Dnieper,—was Russia; a Russia of travellers and trade.

of Russia proper—separate countries which have been tacked on to it.

In the main, the climate is uniform as well as continental. The White Sea and the Baltic Sea have an influence which is limited and by no means far-reaching; they modify without changing the climate of their regions. Moreover, they are frozen during the greater part of the year. The only part of Russia which is in reality influenced by the sea, is the southern shore of the Crimea, which has a climate something like that of the Riviera, only milder.

You cannot divide the great bulk of Russia into various zones of climate; or, if you do, it is equivalent to saying that south of the Arctic region the climate is north-temperate as far as Kostroma, temperate as far as Kharkov, and southern, parallel with the Black Sea. The differences between any such zones are far less sharp than they would be between corresponding distances in Western Europe. Owing to the flatness and sameness of the surface of the land, the variations in the climate from north to south, and from east to west, are slight. There is no perpendicular chain of mountains in European Russia which sharply divides and differentiates the east from the west, neither is there a horizontal range of any importance running from west to east which would sharply differentiate the climates of the north and of the south. The winds encounter no obstacle; and owing to their unchecked sweep and free play, places which are widely distant one from another have, geographically, the same kind of climate. Consequently the height of the land above the sea-level plays no part in the nature of the climate, nor does the sea-board, since it is practically non-existent.

The chief contrast between the climate of Russia and that of Western Europe is found in the mean annual difference of temperature between winter and summer. It is never less than 23°, and sometimes it reaches 35°, whereas in Ireland, the annual variation of temperature is not more than 10°, and in Germany 20°. Moscow in winter has a mean temperature of 18° below freezing-point, and in July one of 64·9 (about the same as Paris). Southern Russia, which is on the same latitude as Paris and Vienna, has in January the same temperature as Stockholm, and in July that of Madrid. The summer, with the exception of the coast of the Baltic and the White Sea, is extremely hot,

hotter than it is in corresponding latitudes in Western Europe, and the winter is much severer and more prolonged. The country is covered with snow for months.

The difference in temperature is not, therefore, a question of latitude. The variations in temperature between the north and the south are less marked than they are in the other countries of Europe. On the other hand, the difference in temperature between the east and the west is sharper. The farther eastward you go in Russia, the colder it gets, and the difference of temperature of winter between the east and the west is greater than the difference of the temperature of the summer between the north and the south. The quality of the summer is determined by the latitude; that of the winter by the longitude.

In a word, the physical surface of Russia is a uniform and monotonous plain, divided into slowly varying belts of vegetation and consisting of a gradually varying soil. It is a continental country, divorced from the sea, and possessing a climate of fierce extremes: a hot, dry summer, and a severe, prolonged winter, a brief and tumultuous autumn and a still briefer spring. The uniformity of the surface and the intensity of the climate are both of them features of great importance in the character of the inhabitants and the history of the nation.

CHAPTER II

WHAT RUSSIA LOOKS LIKE

IT is difficult to give by the medium of words an accurate picture of a country to some one who has never seen it; on the other hand, it is perhaps possible to correct in the reader's mind certain preconceived notions, and certain false impressions, which he has picked up here and there, from stray books of fiction, magazines, or hearsay. I cannot help thinking that whether it be possible or not to convey any kind of true picture, it is essential that the reader should have some kind of background in his mind: so that when he reads of persons and institutions and events, he should not imagine them as taking place in a vague space, but in the midst of definite physical conditions. It will be possible, at any rate, to tell what such a background does not consist of; what it does not, never has, and never will contain.

I will endeavour to uproot from the mind of the reader who has never been in Russia the elements of the picture which are frankly impossible, and to suggest, as far as I can, the probable. In order to do this I will draw upon my own experience. I can remember fairly well what I thought Russia was like before I saw it.

My knowledge was derived from certain pictures of Moscow and St. Petersburg which hung in my nursery, but which, being sternly accurate coloured photographs, appealed in no way to the imagination and therefore left no permanent impression on me; from Jules Verne's book, *Michel Strogov*" (this was illustrated as well as highly imaginative, and therefore left a permanent impression on me); and from various other works of fiction such as *Called Back*, *My Official Wife* (an admirable book), *The Sowers*, Sardou's *Fedora*, and a play called *The*

Red Lamp, many magazine articles, the illustrated newspapers, and a certain amount of hearsay.

In the midst of the haze caused by this farrago of fiction were a few grains of fact I gathered from my father, who had lived in Russia during his youth. The smaller grains did not fit in with the general picture, and I kept them apart in a pigeon-hole by themselves. I had also read a good deal of Russian fiction by Russian authors, but the people and things described in these books, in Tolstoi's novels, for instance, seemed to me so like the people and things which I saw every day that I never thought of them as happening anywhere else but in England or France. I will go further: the people and events in Tolstoi's novels seemed to me the only people and events which I had ever come across in books which were like real living people and things; Tolstoi's description of Russian society might be true or untrue, but it seemed to me the only truthful and vivid record of London society. This made me the more inclined to lend the creatures of his imagination a background which I was already familiar with.

In the case of Turgeniev, there was, of course, a difference, Turgeniev's characters seemed to me different, but then, on the other hand, I did not think they ever attained, however psychologically interesting and artistically portrayed, to the pitch of the speaking, living reality of Tolstoi's creations. Nor do I think so now that I have seen in the flesh people from whom he might have drawn his pictures. I mean I have seen and known people of Turgeniev's generation. I imagined, therefore, Turgeniev's novels as taking place in a vague country where there was a great deal of hay and a great many fir trees, where one drove for a number of *versts* in a carriage called a *tarantass*, till one came to a country-house belonging to a neighbouring landowner, where there was a circle of incongruous people: a sceptical and polished old gentleman who spoke French; a liberal, but fundamentally utterly unemancipated; his wife, a languid ex-beauty, an invalid, with an enigmatic smile, velvet eyes, and an insinuating voice; the daughter, with short hair and a white frock, who said nothing, but who had a magnetic, cool personality; and the son of the house, from the university, who was bored, and his friend, who smoked a long pipe and read Locke, and was engaged in seducing the maid-servant. I imagined

these people as being all rather self-conscious and fond of discussing abstract questions far into the night.

Besides this, I imagined that the peasant life and the episodes of sport took place in a country like Germany. But when I thought of Russia, the word called up for me neither Tolstoi nor Turgeniev, but the Russia I had created for myself from English and French fiction.

I have written this because I believe it to be a common experience. I have often heard people talk about Russia who have never been there, and have realized that the picture in their minds was very much like that I used to have myself.

The nature of that picture was something like this: A country where there was practically no summer—summer did not enter into this scheme, still less an autumn and a spring. But a perpetual winter prevailed. In this grey and frozen landscape, illumined every now and then by the Midnight Sun, there were barbarically gaudy buildings; the churches were all cathedrals, and these not so much Byzantine as Moorish or Indian; the private houses in the towns glittered, outside and inside, with decoration. The rooms were high and domed, all gilt, with alabaster pillars that recalled the Alhambra. This idea certainly prevails, for when, some years ago, Tolstoi's *Resurrection* was put on the stage at His Majesty's Theatre, with a great deal of care, and in some respects with accuracy, the drawing-room in Moscow in which Prince Nekliudov visited his friends was represented as a high, gaudy, glittering room, rather like a restaurant, whereas in reality it would have been a severely simple room in the Empire, or in the Early Victorian style.

In the country I imagined there were large stone feudal castles with moat, rampart and portcullis; the castles were situated either on steep mountains or in the midst of forests. There were no rivers, except one of naphtha which caught fire, somewhere in Siberia, near Irkutsk—a town which I imagined to be a dazzling, barbaric citadel full of hordes of spangled Tartars — how different from the reality when I saw it! As for the people, there were only three classes: diplomatists in evening clothes who hid behind the arras in order to overhear State secrets let fall by unsuspecting foreigners, generals in fur caps who could be bribed, if you gave them a sovereign, to do anything, policemen and Nihilists.

This last class was wide and comprehensive. It included sullen, starving peasants and princesses—especially princesses. All the princesses were Nihilists. They had not the appearance of Nihilists at first sight, but they were Nihilists for all that. They were very beautiful, they were always dressed in furs even in the evening, and in midsummer, (although the furs were then mingled with satin); they smoked cigarettes, and they concealed somewhere on their persons, in the most improbable places (their jewelled headgear or their cigarette-cases), bombs of dynamite as small as bonbons and as deadly as ten-inch shells.

As for the rest of the population, any one who was not a Nihilist was a member of the police; he was not dressed as a policeman—no more than a Nihilist was dressed as a Nihilist—but he belonged to the police and especially to the "Third Section." What the "Third Section" was I didn't know, except that it was *dreaded*. Every now and then the police threatened people with knouts: a knout was an instrument made of knotted wire. It may be said at once that the Russian word *knut* (knout) is the ordinary word for whip (which played a part in criminal punishments in Russia, similar to that of our cat-o'-nine-tails). But a whip is not a thing you see often in everyday life in Russia. The cabmen, for instance, seldom have a whip, and when they do it is an ineffectual instrument made of a stick with a string lash.

To complete my fancy picture. This strange country, in which at any moment hordes of brilliantly clad barbarians called Tartars, covered with spangles (here Jules Verne was the authority), might make a raid on the traveller, and dance and put out his eyes, was governed by a being called the *White* Tsar, who lived in the Kremlin in cold marble halls. Why he should not have been able to afford a fire, I do not know; and there he discussed with his generals the latest news from the Nihilist camp, which had been overheard by the diplomatist—and every now and then he went for a walk over a road which had been undermined by the Nihilists, and he would often have been blown up but for the private affairs of the Nihilist princess who was always engaged in an amorous intrigue, just at the very moment when she should have been pressing the bell which should cause the explosion.

It will be said that this picture is fantastically exaggerated.

It is; but not more so than the pictures of Russian life in such a novel as *The Sowers*, for instance, or than those which are given to us on the English stage. It is not farther from the truth than what one frequently reads and hears said about Russia. I will quote another example. Take the following well-known, magnificently written lines from Browning's "Waring":

> "Or who, in Moscow, toward the Czar,
> With demurest of footfalls
> Over the Kremlin's pavement, bright
> With serpentine and syenite,
> Steps, with five other Generals,
> That simultaneously take snuff,
> For each to have pretext enough
> To kerchiefwise unfold his sash
> Which, softness' self, is yet the stuff
> To hold fast where a steel chain snaps,
> And leave the grand white neck no gash?"

This is fine poetry, but as a picture of Russia it is as far from the truth as Jules Verne. In Prince Serge Volkonski's interesting Lowell lectures, *Pictures of Russian History and Russian Literature*,[1] he tells the following characteristic anecdote: "I remember an American girl who frankly confessed that she did not like Russian books representing Russian life; she thought the things they pictured were not original enough, lacking 'local colour'; she much preferred English novels *about* Russia, they were so much more 'Russian.' This is characteristic. The 'Russian novel' as known in English acquires a sort of exotic charm: snow and wolves and police agents with the threatening prospect of Siberia in the background give to the pictures of our human passions that same varnish which other authors try to give them by transporting their stories into Central Africa or New Zealand."

Not long ago I was staying in a small Russian provincial town where the annual meeting of the County Council for the district was being held. I went out for a walk one afternoon with a Russian friend of mine, and just as we had reached the outskirts of the town, and we looked round on the landscape, we both said simultaneously, "What a typical Russian scene!" I told my friend that it was very different from what most foreigners who had never been to Russia imagined a typical Russian scene to be.

[1] London: Kegan Paul, 1888.

It was an autumn day in late October. The sky was cloudless and of a light transparent blue, clear and dazzling. So clear was the atmosphere that the distant features of the landscape were as distinct as they are in a kodak photograph. The view had the sharpness of a photograph. We were standing on a wooden bridge which stretched over a narrow and utterly sluggish brown river; the banks were of shelving sand, and you had to go down some wooden steps to reach the bridge on one side and to go up some wooden steps to reach the farther side. On one side of the river, and about thirty yards from it, was the town, standing on level ground; on the other side of it the level country stretched out into the distance, a flat, dark brown plain, cut by a road.

What you saw of the town was, on the right, a large cathedral, the fourth biggest in Russia: the style was Palladian, I suppose, that is to say, it had a front of five large Corinthian pillars supporting a pediment, and a dome; walls, dome, and pillars were all whitewashed. A little farther to the left of it and beyond it was another church, which had a white spire and a round cupola painted ultramarine-blue. Round the church was an open space, and then along the river began the line of houses which formed the limit of the town. They were low, two-storied houses most of them, some built of bricks and whitewashed, and some built of wood. The corner house of the street, which ended where the open square in which the cathedral stood began, was a barracks, two-storied, of a dun colour and built of stone. The road in front of the house was sandy, dusty, and brown.

On the other side of the river the houses were few and straggling, and belonged to poor people. They had but one story and were built of logs placed horizontally one on the top of the other, and were roofed with iron, but on the right of the road was a larger house, painted white, with a tall chimney, from which smoke proceeded: this was a factory of some kind. Next to it was a tall, wooden windmill; one of its four fans had been broken off and was missing. Right in the distance, on the horizon of the plain, you could see a bare brown wood.

As we leant over the bridge we observed at the foot of the left bank of the river, a raft, and on it, a little wooden house with windows and a flat roof; on the raft a whole bevy of women, in coloured prints, were washing their linen. Five or six soldiers were looking on. The soldiers had got on their dun-coloured,

rough-stuff grey coats; some of them were bringing bundles of linen to be washed; others were chaffing the washerwomen.

At our feet, moored to one of the supports of the bridge, was a flat barge, and on it a soldier, in a black tunic and high boots, was washing his linen himself: he must have climbed down the bridge to get there.

There was not a sound in the air, except the splash made by the washing. And then from the plain, along the dusty, rutty road, a whole line of flat carts creaked along, one in front of the other, five of the foremost being without drivers; all of these carts were full of sacks. Alongside of the sixth walked the owner, a bearded peasant dressed in a brown leather and very dirty coat lined with sheepskin. And every now and then he influenced the march of the line of carts by shouting a word or two to the horses. Not long after this, the line of carts crossed the bridge and turned into the town and the creaking died away in the distance; the lazy stillness fell upon the place once more: and so great was that stillness that the whole landscape seemed like a coloured slide of a magic lantern.

Then once more the stillness was broken by the rattling of a carriage; this time it was a *troika*—a *troika* is a carriage drawn by three horses abreast, only in this particular carriage there were only two, one harnessed in the middle and one on the side, so that there would have been room for the third. These were evidently post-horses belonging to the County Council, and in the narrow carriage, just big enough for two, sat two educated men, tidily dressed, one perhaps a doctor, and in front of them on the box, which is on the same level as the carriage seat, the driver in a dark blue peaked cap and a pea-jacket was making a spluttering noise with his lips, which is the way to tell Russian horses to behave gently.

Once more the stillness was unbroken; and only now and then the sleepy cry of poultry in the straw of the houses on the roadside accentuated the quiet.

But as we looked towards the town, at the brown street stretching between the river and houses, we saw in the distance, turned to gold in the low sunshine, a cloud of dust, and out of that cloud came a sound of voices and a tramp of feet, and presently we saw a company of soldiers marching, all in their brown-grey coats, without their rifles, and carrying each of them

a small white bundle. Presently we heard the rhythm of a large and cheerful song. The verse had ended, and by the time the next verse began the soldiers were much nearer to us. The singing was like this: One soldier, waving his hand as though he were a conductor, sang the opening phrase by himself. Then the chorus joined in with a crash. The four parts were strongly accentuated, but they seemed less like the complementary harmonies of the melody, than successive melodies, imitating the first one and forming a rough counterpoint. The chorus began on a high note, with a high quick phrase; then with a swinging, trotting rhythm, it descended in an answering phrase; it rose again and, broadening, swelled into a great shout, ending in five, slow, sustained notes, when unexpectedly and abruptly, with a sharp clean cry, the chorus ended once more on the high note, leading you to expect it must begin again at once, which it soon did. The soldiers marched on for about two minutes in silence, then the solo took up the song again, and another verse was sung by the chorus, and the process was repeated; and so on, till they reached the barracks gate at the corner of the street; they were still singing as they passed through the open gateway.

These were soldiers coming back from their weekly wash at the *Bania*, the steam-bath, and in their bundles they were carrying their dirty linen.

Soon after they had gone into barracks, we left the bridge and walked up the steps into the street. We leant beside a wooden railing on the top of the steep bank. Behind us was the town, in front of us the straggling houses and the plain. Once more everything had relapsed into an indescribable peacefulness. Two soldiers toiled up the steps carrying a huge sack; a third soldier, interested in the proceedings, strolled from the barracks and asked them why they were hauling up the sacks.

"Because we want to sell them," they answered, and the joke met with success.

My friend agreed with me that a more typically Russian scene could not be found. The large church, the squat houses, the damaged windmill, the clear, brown plain, the washerwomen, the singing soldiers. You could not see such a thing except in Russia. And the chorus of the soldiers was so strikingly characteristic: the rhythm of the tune, the way it started with a high phrase, and accelerated into a still brisker trot, and then

once more slowed down, broadened and opened out, and ended abruptly. Not only was the rhythm characteristic, but the spirit and quality of the tune, the lilting joyousness of it, and the tremendous driving spring and swing of it. As they came to the final note the soldiers swung their arms down. The chorus was so brisk and cheerful that you would have thought they were celebrating some particularly joyful festival or some especially memorable event, whereas they were just coming back from their weekly bath.

There is now appearing in Russia a collected edition of the works of Mr. H. G. Wells. He has written a preface to them himself, and in it he tells the Russian public what he imagines Russia to be like: the picture he has made himself of Russia from the books of Russian writers. He then wonders how the Russian reader who has never been to England sees that country in his mind's eye, and he remarks that if the Russian has in mind the England of the manufacturing country, the smoke and the " grim smile of the Five Towns," that is not the England that he knows.

It would indeed be difficult to give a foreign reader in one or two vignettes the most characteristic sights of England; because in England, as in any other Western European country, there is so much variety. But in Russia the uniformity is so great that if you describe one scene you are describing a million similar scenes. And when you have differentiated between the north and the south—and even here the difference is far less sharp than in other countries—you have practically summed up the whole.

I of course except outlying districts such as the Caucasus and Finland, which are in reality different countries; but between a village in the Government of St. Petersburg, a village in the Government of Moscow, and a village in the Government of Tambov, there is practically no difference.

As one travels in the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow to the Ural Mountains, one is struck by the absolute monotony and uniformity of the landscape and the physical features of the country. What I have described above is the fringe of a small provincial town. Let us now take a typical landscape in Central Russia.

Let us imagine you are driving, say, twenty or thirty miles through the country. The first thing that will strike you will be

the breadth of the road; in summer it will be as dusty as a desert, in early autumn rutty, and in late autumn, if the season has been rainy, a slush of thick, black mud, as black as tar and as thick as paste.

On either side of you stretch limitless plains; fields of wheat, rye, or buckwheat, without any hedges; every now and then in the distance you will see the outline of a wood; sometimes you will drive past the edge of a large stretch of wood where there are oak, aspen, and birch trees. In July everything to the right and left of you will be a golden sea of corn; later this will be bare stubble; and in the autumn the black fields will be a light emerald-green with the growing wheat, which was sown after the harvest, in August or September.

Or you may pass by green meadows, with small sheets of water in them, and here and there broad marshes. Sometimes the road will be lined with willow trees planted at some distance apart. The only features that will relieve the monotony of the landscape are distant woods, windmills, and the spires of churches. The churches are most of them built of wood, but they are painted in light colours, red or green; sometimes they have some gilding, very often a bright ultramarine cupola. Sometimes a village, if it is rich, will boast of an elaborate brick-built church with four cupolas. By the side of the road you will often pass a post about four feet high, which stands supporting two bits of wood forming a triangle; this is a holy image. Or you will see larger ones, a tall post, taller than a man, on the top of which is a little shrine, an oblong cupboard pointed at the top, which holds a holy ikon. These little wayside shrines are called chapels.

You will often come to marshy bits of road, over which planks have been thrown to make a bridge; sometimes the planks will be in such a rotten state that a track has been made round the marshy place: you will avoid the bridge and circumvent it; sometimes you will come to a small river or a pond, and cross it on a bridge whose loose planks will shake and rattle as the carriage drives over it. Sometimes the bridge will be built on the top of a weir, or rather a lock whose gates never open.

Then you will drive through a small village: the village street is very wide, often fifty yards in width. The cottages are built of flat logs; they are one-storied and thatched with straw; some of them are crooked and appear to be tumbling down. Behind

the houses there is generally a small plot of cultivated ground where vegetables grow, and a shed made of thatch, which looks as if a thatched roof had been taken from a house and put upon the ground, and here and everywhere an immense amount of straw and a great deal of dirt.

Perhaps you will pass through a larger, more well-built village. There you will come across brick houses roofed with iron, and a few houses made of painted wood. These are generally the school, the post office, or perhaps the house of the pope. In the village street there will be quantities of poultry, and of small children in vermilion-red cotton shirts, with straw-coloured hair, growing in thick bunches behind and cropped closely at the edge, over the neck. Here and there you will meet pigs. In the villages also you will see wells from which buckets are lifted by a large pole swinging horizontally over a short pole, the long pole being weighted at one end.

If it is Sunday, you may meet the villagers coming out of church in their Sunday clothes; the men in loose clean shirts, light yellow, red, pink, and blue, but not tucked into their trousers; with their high boots carefully cleaned and having as many creases as possible in them: most of them wearing dark blue peaked caps; and women dressed also in glowing spotless colours, salmon-pink, pale cobalt-green, and pale blue. But if it is a weekday, the women you pass will be dressed in everyday prints, with a white handkerchief on their heads, and the men in darker shirts.

You are sure to meet a whole multitude of carts creaking lazily along, with the driver sitting on some sacks, and his legs hanging over the low sides. If it is cold, he will be wearing his fur cap, and his leather, sheepskin-lined *tulup*, or skirted jacket. You see a good deal of squalor and dirt and straw, but nowhere will you get an impression of bustle and hurry.

But you may be quite wrong if you conclude from the dirty and tumble-down condition of the houses that their inhabitants are necessarily poor. They may be poor, but they may also be rich. Sometimes a peasant who makes money in Russia, will never think of changing his manner of life. This is perhaps less true to-day than it was some years ago.

Windmills, churches, and distant woods—those are the main features of the landscape. Dirt or dust, mud, squalor, slowness,

indolence, and easy-goingness—these are the main characteristics of the manifestations of life that you will meet.

And if you extend your journey, so as to pass through towns, you will notice that they are flat and squat, and that the only tall features in them are the church spires, and the little round cupolas.

I have said that the contrast between the north and the south is not so great as in other countries. This is so; but a difference and a contrast of course exist. The lie of the land is not so very different in the south: you are still in the midst of rolling plains diversified by woods; the main features of the landscape are still churches, windmills, and wayside chapels. The architecture of the churches is exactly the same; so is the shape of the windmills; but where you will notice the main difference lies in the villages and in the appearance of the houses. The villages of South Russia, instead of being uniformly and monotonously brown, are brighter and more cheerful. In Southern Russia small holdings are the rule instead of the exception; the peasant lives in a *hutor* or farm. These little farm-houses are built of bricks, whitewashed or painted pale green or pink, and thatched with straw. They are surrounded by orchards and fruit-trees. They are clean outside and inside. The walls inside are painted red and blue; there are less hens about, and none in the living-rooms.

The national dress of the Little Russian is far more picturesque than that of the Great Russian, but the only place where I have seen it was during the sessions of the first Duma at St. Petersburg. When I was in the south of Russia I was all the time in the region of large factories, and the inhabitants there dressed far more like Birmingham or Manchester mechanics than like Little Russian peasants. Their clothes showed the traces of the inroads, but not of the complete conquest, of progress and education. They showed not quite-fulfilled aspirations towards white shirts and collars. Every now and then, however, you came across a picturesque figure, such as a blind beggar playing a real hurdy-gurdy (the German *Leier* which Schubert tells of in his song, "Der Leiermann," and the French *vielle*). But the whole impression of the south of Russia is cheerful and gay. It is in Central Russia I have seen the most brilliant bits of colouring, but in Southern Russia there is an atmosphere of sunshine

and the laziness that comes of *bien-être:* the country smiles at you. In Central Russia it often has a frowning, sullen aspect.

A very beautiful sight in Southern Russia is, in the autumn, the undulating slopes of ploughed fields, which have the appearance of hills, of a rich dark brown, with clouds of mist rising out of them in the rose-coloured sunset.

Among all the sights one can see in Russia, I think the winter is the most striking: when the snow has definitely fallen, and no temporary thaw can any more dislodge it, until the spring, one is tempted to expect a monotony of days, one exactly like the other, until the spring shall return.

This is not so: there is an infinite variety in the aspect of the snow. There is bluish snow, yellow snow, grey snow, gloomy snow, wet snow, soft snow and hard snow; sick snow, cheerful snow, dirty snow, and dazzling snow. The most beautiful of all the winter phenomena is that which occurs when, after a heavy fall of snow, it freezes hard and the sun comes out. Nothing can describe the beauty of the orchards and the woods.

Against an azure sky, whose purity and intensity are increased by the whiteness of the earth, the trees stand out, covered, as it were, with an unearthly blossom, with myriads of delicate flowers and petals, with fairy branches and powdered leaves. It seems as if in this blossoming the world had been changed into an immense orchard and every tree had become a fruit-tree; the stems of the birch trees gleam like silver columns; and the sun, shining on the powdered and petalled branches, produces a hundred iridescent lights; the bushes and the undergrowth stand out in all the beauty of their outline. The whole world is a shimmering fairy-tale; fantastic, strange, and entrancing: one cannot help thinking that it is about to fade and dissolve like a rainbow or a soap-bubble; that it is the sport of a wizard or the dream of a sleeping princess.

When the sunset comes, the trees blush and are tinted with a wonderful hue, like that of almond blossom; add to this the exhilaration of clean dazzling air, and the impression is overwhelming. Even more wonderful is the effect of the sunset on such a clear day, on a hilly slope, for in the flat country there are often clefts and hollows which form hills. The reflection of the sunset spreads over them like a gradual blush, and one seems to be in the world of Shelley's "Prometheus." You think this is

going to last, and you wake up the next morning and find the world changed: the blossom has left the trees, leaving dewdrops, and sparkling threads, and glistening webs and films hanging from the brown branches. The sun is still shining, and it is still fairyland, but a different fairyland. Then the next day the sun will not shine at all, and the sky will be like a heavy grey curtain with spaces of glinting blue, and, perhaps, a faint pink streak; and the distant woods will be as blue as the deepest blue you can find in a child's paint-box; and far away little brown sledges will give you an idea of the distance and the width of the space in front of you. Then, perhaps, the next day the snow will fall in a whirling blizzard or in a steady shower of flakes. And thus the pageant shifts and changes daily until the winter is done.

As one drives through the snowy plains in a sledge, often the most common and the most disagreeable of the winter phenomena is the *metiel*, a kind of minor blizzard, a dense downpour of whirling and blinding snow and sleet. One instantly loses one's way; one's only guides in the winter, besides the track and ruts made by carts, are the little stumpy posts which are placed at intervals all along the roadside. When the *metiel* covers the tracks the road is obliterated and the posts are invisible. You drive to the right and to the left; at last the coachman thinks he has found the track: you drive straight on, then perhaps, an hour later, he finds that you have come back on your old track, and that you have been moving in a vicious circle. Pushkin has described this in one of his most famous poems, which is called the "Metiel." I have been able to check the poet's accuracy by experience, and I have found it only too correct.

The Russian peasant is marvellous in finding a track by the very scantiest evidence and sign: a straw is enough to put him right again when he has lost his way.

The winter is the longest of the Russian seasons. The shortest is the spring. It is heralded by the melting of the snows, the flooding of the rivers, and the overflowing of the meadows. This is also a most wonderful sight: the plains are covered with sheets of water in which the trees seem to float like thin silver shadows; it is fantastic, unreal, and fairylike.

When the spring comes it invades the country with a rush.

I arrived once in the country in April and found all the woods bare; a fortnight later everything was green and the bees were booming about the blossom.

In the summer the most striking sights are the immense stretches of ripening corn, the flowering bean-fields, and the warm nights which grow darker as the harvest approaches; then the whole of the land is a sea of golden corn. The heat is often intense. It is too hot to go out in the daytime, and bathing in the river is like bathing in hot tea.

The autumn is longer than the spring; but the period of autumn tints does not last much longer than a fortnight or three weeks. The trees are splashed with gold and crimson. During a week or two the pageant is at its height, then a day of wind will come and fling the tattered branches to the earth. In the south the period of autumn tints lasts much longer. Everything is hot and dry; the trees remain green and golden; there is little sharpness or moisture in the air, and " die küsse des scheidenden Sommers " are soft and long-drawn-out. Summer seems to die of excess of warmth and beauty. Sometimes there is an Indian summer after the leaves have fallen—a period of mild and warm weather; a period of stillness and decay, when it seems that the woods are under the influence of an untimely spring:

" Qualche primavera dissepolta."

But as a general rule the time between the fall of the leaf and the first snow is either cold and raw, or damp and sullen. It freezes hard at night. There is a sharpness in the morning air, a smell of smoke, of damp leaves and of moist brown earth. Then comes the first snow.

It is a tradition that the snow must fall three times before it finally comes to stay. But this tradition is by no means invariably fulfilled. Sometimes the end of the autumn is heralded by three days of heavy snowfall, which never thaws again. But more often there is a slight snowfall which lasts, perhaps, a day, and is succeeded by a thaw, and a period varying from a fortnight to a month of grey and damp, or frosty and fine, and sometimes even warmer weather. Then a second snowfall followed by a spell of still more frosty and cold weather, and then the third decisive fall of snow, which no subsequent thaw is strong enough to dislodge. Thus the winter, which begins generally

towards the end of November, lasts straight on until April and sometimes till the end of April.

The autumn and the spring are trying seasons in the towns, owing to their many and abrupt transitions from heat to cold, and from frost to thaw. The winter is the healthiest season in Russia and, perhaps, the most comfortable. There is no place where you feel the cold so little, because every preparation has been made for it. The houses are warmed evenly and throughout; the passages are as warm as the rooms; and when you go out you are prepared with furs and felt boots to face the cold. I have never felt the cold so keenly as when coming back from Russia to London in winter, from the warm wood-lighted stoves and stove-warmed houses of Russia to the coal chimneys of London, which so insufficiently heat the draughty rooms when it is cold, and overheat them when it is warm.

And even if the winter is not the pleasantest season in Russia —which is after all a matter of taste—it is, perhaps, the most characteristic, and reveals and sets in motion some of the most characteristic and peculiar qualities and customs of the Russian people.

CHAPTER III

WHAT THE RUSSIANS ARE

MR. RUDYARD KIPLING in one of his stories has said that the mistake we made with regard to Russians is that we have treated them as the most eastern of European nations instead of the most western of Eastern nations. The epigram has the appearance of truth. It is one of those phrases which are all the easier to accept because they seem neatly and finally to dispose of a puzzling problem. But the generalization requires further elucidation.

What does Mr. Kipling mean by Russian? Does he mean Slav? If he means Slav, if he would allow his definition to include the Slav, he would then find it difficult to reconcile the phrase with history; it would contradict instead of confirming the facts of the case.

On the other hand, if he means that the kernel and predominating element of the Russian race is not Slav—the Slav being the brother and the neighbour of the Latin and the German—but Touranian, Tartar, or Mongol, then the generalization would be a hazardous assumption which requires the support of substantial evidence. The assumption is an old one; it raises a question which for many years has been passionately disputed, and the dispute has been kindled by prejudice and hatred on the one side, and by pride and patriotism on the other, so that the results of an impartial examination have necessarily been obscured and lost sight of. Nevertheless, those who have been in a position to conduct the examination impartially, from the point of view of the unbiased historian and not from that either of the passionate Pan-Slavist or the anti-Russian Occidental, have come to precisely the opposite conclusion, namely, that although we find in Russia the remains of a multitude of heterogeneous

races, and the marked traces of three surviving and predominant elements, nevertheless among these there is one element which has proved tougher than the others and predominated, and that is the Slav element; whatever alien imprint it may have received, and in spite of all foreign admixture.

Now nobody denies that the Slav element is Aryan; therefore Mr. Kipling's phrase is a clever and suggestive half-truth, valuable in so far as it affords a suggestion of one side of the truth, but inadequate and unconvincing if it is meant to be a comprehensive definition. For whereas it would be difficult to defend and to substantiate it by the evidence of history and observation, it would be a comparatively easy task to collect sufficient evidence to demolish its claim to comprehensiveness.

If we consult an ethnological map of Russia we are at once confronted with a chaos of races and a Babel of tongues. Almost every creed of the East and West is represented. A wide variety of Christian denominations, as well as Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists, and Pagans. The diversity of race is equally remarkable: we find Lapps, Finns, Great Russians, Little Russians, Esthonians, Letts, Lithuanians, Votiaks, Mordvinians, Tartars, Poles, Kalmucks, Caucasians, Armenians, Circassians, Georgians, and Mingrelians.

Out of this chaos, three principal branches stand out distinct, to one of which all the others, with the exception of Jews, Roumanians, Germans, Kalmucks, and the peoples of the Caucasus, will be found to be affiliated. They are the Finns, the Tartars, and the Slavs.

The Finnish race is said by historians to have originally occupied the country which we now call Russia. Its origin and place among the families of the world, is a question which can be left to specialists. It is obviously clear that the Finns are not an Aryan or an Indo-European race. It is equally clear that the remains of the race which are to be found unmixed and prosperous in Finland and in Hungary, are found scattered throughout various parts of Russia. It is also equally clear that the Finnish element is not the preponderant and not the dominating element. It has been absorbed and assimilated by another element, and that element must be either the Tartar or the Slav. The question therefore arises, Which element has got the upper hand in the struggle for

predominance in Russia, the Aryan Slav, or the Turkish Tartar?

Before discussing this question, it is necessary to add that the Finnish element, while undergoing the process of being merged into what we call Russia and assimilated by the weaker element, has had an important influence and left visible marks on the element by which it has been assimilated. It has acted on the non-Finnish Russians as a strong leaven. The Finnish type of countenance, with its small eyes, large nose, thick lips, and high cheek-bones, is often met with in Russia, especially among the peasants. Most people bearing in mind this particular stamp of countenance speak of the "Tartar type."

M. Leroy Beaulieu, in his masterly analysis of the origins of the Russian nationality, notes this fact. And, indeed, one of the first things which strikes the traveller when he arrives in Russia for the first time, is the comparative rarity of this so-called "Tartar" and in reality Finnish type, where he expects to find it. (For instance, the railway guards, then the porters, the soldiers he sees on the platforms, probably strike him as being peculiarly Germanic, with their fair hair, blue or grey eyes, and straight features.) But he will be struck by the universal prevalence of this type among the Finns, and by the difference between this so-called Tartar type and the actual Tartars, when he sees them, who present so many varieties that it is difficult to classify them in a phrase, but who are quite distinct from the Finn.

Now, since it is so obvious that Russia has not been absorbed and dominated by the Finnish race, the predominant element must either be the Slav or the Tartar. M. Leroy Beaulieu points out that never in history, philology, or ethnology has there been a less satisfactory title given than that of "Tartar," which serves to denote the Asiatic element in the Russian nation.

The name of "Tartar" was originally given to the Mongols, who invaded Russia in the thirteenth century; but it was extended to all the heterogeneous tribes who followed in the wake of the conquering Mongols and subsequently passed on to the Turks, who, starting from Turkestan and being closely allied to the Ottomans, invaded Europe through Russia and settled on the banks of the Volga.

They invaded Russia in the thirteenth century; by the beginning of the sixteenth century they had already been driven

back to the limits of the kingdom. They sowed the seeds of no civilization, founded but few cities, and far from devoting themselves to agriculture, they remained for the greater part nomad.

M. Leroy Beaulieu points out that the influence of the Tartar invasion in Russia was far less than that of the Arab domination in Spain, for the following reasons:

(1) The Tartars reigned over only one-half of European Russia.

(2) Over the greater part of the country which they ruled their domination was indirect; the conquered races retaining their own sovereignties and being subject only to the suzerainty and not to the immediate dominion of the Tartars.

(3) The Arabs occupied the richest and most fertile provinces of Spain; whereas the Tartars occupied the most thinly populated regions of Russia: the Steppes of the south and of the east. In the centre their advance was confined to the course of the large rivers, as is apparent from the traces which they have left until this day.

(4) The territory which the Tartars occupied was at that time not even occupied by the Russians. The Russians had not yet penetrated so far. They had scarcely reached the central basin of the Volga; but it was among the Finnish tribes that the Tartars settled.

(5) The fact of the Tartars remaining nomad; whereas in Spain the Arabs spread industry and civilization and founded large cities.

(6) The traces of the Arab language in Spanish are incomparably more marked than those of the Tartar language in Russian.

M. Leroy Beaulieu concludes that the Tartar influence on Russia was great, but historical and political only, and not racial; and that it can be fitly compared with the influence of the Ottoman Turks on the Balkan provinces and on Greece. The Tartar element, whatever its historic influence may have been, remained alien and foreign to the rest of the nation. It was neither assimilated—as happened in case of the Finnish element—nor did it assimilate, any more than the Ottoman Turks succeeded in assimilating the subject races of the Balkan peninsula; but it was slowly and gradually eliminated. If, therefore, out of the three predominant races which occupied Russia, the finally

triumphant element is neither the Finnish nor the Tartar, it must be the Slav.

The Slavs, like the Latins, the Celts, and the Germans, belong to the Aryan or Indo-European race; the Slavonic languages like Greek, Latin, and German, are dialects of the Indo-European language, of which Sanskrit is the oldest known form.

As to the origin of the Slavonic tribes, the reader must consult professors of ethnology. Two things are certain: firstly, that the Slavs, like the Celts, the Greeks, the Latins, and the Germans, belong to the western branch of the Aryans; and secondly, that from time immemorial Slavs have been found in Europe, on the banks of the Vistula and of the Dnieper. The theories of their origin, and subsequent peregrinations, may be said to be conjectural.

It is noteworthy that whereas the Slavonic languages seem the more closely allied to the German, the Slavonic character bears a stronger affinity to that of the Greeks and the Latins.

The Slavs, in the process of overrunning and absorbing Russia, formed of themselves two natural divisions which correspond more or less to the north and to the south. They are, namely, the Great Russians and the Little Russians. The centre of the Great Russians is Moscow; that of the Little Russians is Kiev. The Little Russians occupy the plains of the south, the basins of the Dnieper, the Bug, and the Dniester; their territory was open to invasion and their expansion was consequently retarded; whereas the Great Russians, being masters of the territory of the north and the east, were free to expand, and able to seize the basin of the Volga (the richest part of the country) and the lakes of the Ural; and to penetrate into the region of the black country, and into the plains of the Volga and of the Don.

There is also a third element, namely, the "White Russians," who occupy a wooded region in the Governments of Mogilev, Vitebsk, Grodno, and Minsk. The White Russians were at one time conquered by the Lithuanians and then by the Poles, and for a long time they were a bone of contention between the latter and the Tsars of Moscow. Their population amounts to about three or four millions, whereas that of the Little Russians amounts to about sixteen millions and that of the Great Russians to about forty millions.

The difference between the Great Russians and the Little

Russians is more or less the same difference which exists between the populations of the north and the south in any country; the same kind of difference which we find between the Piedmontese or the Milanese and the Southern Italians; between the Frenchmen of the north and the Frenchmen of the south. The Northerners, the Great Russians, are more stolid, more tough, and more capable; the Little Russians, children of a more genial climate, and nursed among softer surroundings, are more indolent, less enterprising; more mobile and alert in mind, and physically more apathetic; more imaginative and less positive; more independent and individual, and at the same time lacking in that power of co-operative force which is the strength of the Great Russian.

The Great Russian was the pioneer of the Slav race. And it was the Great Russian who, starting from the West, conquered and colonized the country which is now called Russia. He emerged from among the other Slavs, and although he started by being the weakest element politically, he proved the paradox that the weakest is the strongest, and ended, as Jack conquered the Giant, by triumphing over all his rivals, and forming the kernel of a new empire. The history of Russia is the history of the rise of the Great Russian element from among other Slav races in the West. Its triumph over these other elements and its expansion eastward, northward, and southward—but especially eastward. For when Peter the Great, and before him the Muscovite Tsars, Ivan III and Ivan IV, moved westward and northward, they were merely going back on their European base. The history of the Great Russian is the record of a perpetual struggle against the East; his conquests signify the expansion of Russia eastwards.

He started from Europe, from the cradle of all the Russians, from Little Russia, the district below the Dnieper, and from White Russia and from Novgorod, and expanded during six centuries to the Ural Mountains, the Caspian Sea, and the Caucasus.

The Great Russian element is the most mixed of the Slavs. And those who would wish to prove that the Russians are Orientals and not European, to substantiate the phrase which I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, have here their only possible makings of a case.

The Great Russian, in his Odyssey of expansion, assimilated

a certain Finnish admixture, and he underwent the Tartar occupation; the one had a racial, the other a political influence.

The Finnish admixture left in him a certain physical imprint; the type of countenance which consists of flat face and high cheek-bones, and which is often met with in Russia, comes from the Finnish element. This I have already mentioned, but it cannot be said too often. The Tartar occupation, when the Great Russians became the vassals of the Tartar-Khans, although it had practically little racial influence (the Russians derived no permanent physical imprint from the Tartars, and neither assimilated nor were assimilated by them), had a moral and political influence. And whether it be the Finnish admixture, or the yoke of the Tartars, the fact remains that the Great Russian grew into a tougher, more obstinate, and more persistent type than his brother Slavs. It is probably the admixture of alien blood which leavened and corrected the Slav malleability in him, and turned him out equipped to be the most obstinate if not the fittest in the struggle for supremacy. At the same time what he gained in toughness and patience, he lost in originality, independence, and pride.

But although the Great Russian underwent this twofold alien influence, the Tartar and the Finnish, it would be difficult, on the evidence of history, as well as on that of common sense, to maintain that the Great Russian ceased to be a Slav, or that the foreign Finnish or Touranian element, and the influence of the Tartar yoke, got the upper hand to such an extent that it ousted all that was Slav in him. And this is precisely what it would be necessary to do if we wished to prove the Great Russian to be Oriental rather than an Indo-European.

Although the Great Russian is not a pure and unadulterated Indo-European, he is not a Touranian.

M. Leroy Beaulieu, in discussing this question, says that the Great Russian is not only Slav, as the French and the Spaniards are Latins, by their traditions and their civilization, but he is Slav by direct filiation, by his body and by his race. A great part of the blood in his veins is Slavonic and Caucasian.

It would be possible to write pages to show why this must be so, adducing the testimony of historians, and marshalling the evidence of ethnology and a whole host of scientific observers and investigators; but it will be simpler to call into the witness-

box the witness of common sense, whose evidence is perhaps more likely to convince the casual reader, who has neither the leisure nor the inclination to listen to a lecture on ethnography. Common sense tells us that if we take as twelve Great Russians twelve soldiers, twelve sailors, twelve policemen, twelve railway guards, twelve railway porters, twelve cabmen, twelve peasants, we shall find that the majority of them are Aryan in type—Aryan in such a way as no Finn, no Hungarian, and no Turk is Aryan.

Take the photographs of any twelve living Russian celebrities, excepting men with a strong dose of foreign or Semite extraction. Look, for instance, at the portraits of Count Tolstoi, General Kuropatkin, Shaliapin the singer, Admiral Dubasov, Khomiakov the ex-President of the Duma, Sozonov the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Kovalieski, or any present member of the Duma, and it will be obvious at a first glance that in the faces of all these men, whatever may be their antecedents or descent, however complicated their lineage, the Aryan-Slav type predominates. Or look up the portraits of twelve famous Russians in the past—of Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, poets; Aksakov, novelist; Soloviev, Suvorov, Skobeliev, Admiral Makarov, Turgeniev, Prince Kilhov, the same thing is true of them also.

It would, of course, be possible for the *advocatus diaboli* to make a collection of pictures in which the Finnish type predominates. But I defy him to make a collection of twelve Russian famous men in which the Finnish type is stronger than the Slav, unless they be of obviously foreign extraction, and by foreign I mean that they have an admixture of blood which is altogether non-Russian, German, Semite, or Latin.

The main distinctive type of the Great Russian remains the tall, fair-haired, blue or grey-eyed Aryan. The difference between the Russian and the Western European is greater than that between the Russian and the Asiatic.

Perhaps the reason why many people have accustomed themselves to think of the Russians as a semi-Oriental nation is that they have roughly considered Slavs, Mongols, Finns, and Tartars to be all members of the same family, and have neglected to ascertain that the Slav, so far from being an Asiatic, is no more and no less European than a Greek, an Italian, a German, an Irishman, or an Englishman.

CHAPTER IV

THE RUSSIAN CHARACTER

IT has often been said that Russia is the country of paradoxes, and it is easy enough to illustrate the point by a hundred examples. In writing on the Russian character I have myself often used the saying to account for seemingly directly contradictory phenomena which the Russian character so frequently affords. But I sometimes wonder whether the application of the phrase is not a convenient way of shirking a difficulty, and whether the impression of a paradox is not sometimes the result of superficial inquiry rather than of an exhaustive investigation into causes and results. Contradictory elements are to be found in the Great Russian without any doubt, just as contradictory elements are found in the Anglo-Saxon, the Celt, and the German; but it is perhaps not sufficient to say paradox and then to pass on. It would be interesting to know whether there is any common cause which must inevitably produce contradictory and twofold results.

In the case of the Great Russian, there is first of all the grain of Finnish alloy in his metal which accounts at least for something twofold. He is first of all Slav—and before going any farther let us consider what are the characteristics of the Slav in contradistinction to those of other races. This is certainly no idle or useless question in view of the strange opinions which are current respecting the Slav nature, and which are due to ignorance; since the average Western European is inclined to class the Slav with Mongols, Tartars, and, in general, with barbarous Asiatics.

The Slav is the reverse of barbarous. He is first and foremost peaceable, malleable, ductile, and plastic; and consequently distinguished by agility of mind, by a capacity for imitation and

assimilation, and a corresponding lack of originality and initiative. He is deficient in will and character, and superabundant in ideas, understanding, and sympathy.

Well, granted this; and granted not only that the Great Russian is mainly Slav, but affords evidence, by his past history and his daily conduct, that he possesses these essentially Slav qualities, how do we account for his achievements, his conquest and victory over the Oriental dominion, the building up of a great empire, which are obviously the result of qualities of an altogether different character, and the fruits by which he is known? In achieving a work, which stands patent for all the world to see in the shape of the Russian Empire, as it exists to-day, it is obvious that he has given proof of other qualities besides these which are more or less negative, such as receptivity, plasticity, and assimilation.

Both in the deeds of her great men and in the work of her obscure and unremembered millions, Russia, "bright with names that men remember, loud with names that men forget," has given evidence of qualities such as energy, sometimes of a frantic kind—as in the case of Peter the Great, who, though an exceptional Russian, was certainly a typical Russian—of laborious patience, endurance, and obstinacy.

If, not content with saying paradox and throwing up the sponge, in face of any attempt at finding an explanation, we investigate the matter more nearly, what do we find?

In the first place there is the alien admixture in the Great Russian, the fusion of the assimilated Finnish element which seems to have made for toughness and energy, and in the second place there is the influence of climate.

With regard to the alien admixture, it certainly must have had some kind of toughening and strengthening result, for in those Slav races which remained entirely pure, without any alien admixture, we do not find this tough element. It is absent in the Poles, for instance, for had it existed among them in a preponderating degree, there would at the present day be a large Poland and a small Russia.

Then we have the question of climate. There is no doubt that the influence of the Russian climate on the Great Russians is twofold and produces two contradictory results. It leads them,

firstly, to battle with the hostile forces of nature, for battle with them he must, as far as possible, in order to live, and consequently the struggle develops in him qualities of tenacity, energy, and strength; and secondly, it leads him to bow down and submit to the overwhelming and insuperable forces of nature, against which all struggle is hopeless. Thus it is that he develops qualities of patience, resignation, and weakness. This, again, accounts for that mixture in the Russian which more than all things puzzles the Western European, namely, the blend of roughness and good-nature, of kindness and brutal insensibility. The very fact that he has been hardened by his struggle for existence under desperate conditions has taught the Russian to sympathize with the sorrows and sufferings of his fellow-creatures. Hence his kindness, his sympathy with the afflicted, the desolate, and the oppressed, which strikes everybody who has come into close contact with the Russian people. On the other hand, in the face of obstacles, not a natural hardness, but the stoicism which the bitterness of the struggle has taught him, gets the upper hand. And he applies to an adversary, an enemy, or to any person who has been found guilty of transgressing his code of laws, a brutal treatment, with the same inflexibility with which he would be ready to undergo it, should he be found guilty of an offence calling for a similar punishment. Hence the calm with which a Russian peasant will inflict a tremendous beating—even to death, if it be deemed necessary—on a horse-stealer, which equals the stoicism with which he would himself undergo the beating had he been detected in the crime and condemned to the same punishment. This insensibility, this desperate stoicism, has made people open their eyes when writers speaking from personal experience have affirmed that the Russian peasant is essentially humane, and more humane than other Europeans of the same class. Examples of brutality, whether in real life or in fiction, naturally strike the imagination and stick in the mind more easily than "little unremembered acts of kindness and love," whose very point is that they are unremembered.

But whereas both these qualities exist side by side, the milder predominates. It is his normal state, and acts of brutality are generally the result of exceptional circumstances. That is to say, the Russian peasant may be said to be naturally a

good-natured being, humane and compassionate, but capable of enduring or inflicting suffering, should the circumstances demand it, with unruffled calm. It would be a great mistake to think of him as a being who in his normal state, and in his everyday life, without any rhyme or reason, is constantly swaying between extremes of unaccountable kindness and unaccountable brutality. He is naturally humane, and naturally peaceful and disinclined to fight. To bring his hardness and ruder qualities into play exceptional circumstances are needed, not to mention drink. Even under the influence of drink he is as a rule inclined to be good-natured; but if drink be combined with a pressure of further exceptional circumstances, say an act of punishment or revenge, he will then be capable of committing wild excesses.

Personally in my experience of the Russian peasantry I have never witnessed on their part any single example of brutality; whereas I have come across hundreds of instances of their good-nature and their kindness.

The above tends to show that the gentler and more peaceable qualities predominate in him. This blend, therefore, of human charity and brutish insensibility can be considered not as an unaccountable paradox, but rather as the result of the twofold lesson he learns in the hard school of his life and the bitter war he wages with nature. He learns to suffer, and therefore to sympathize with suffering; he learns to bear suffering with stoicism, and therefore to inflict it with insensibility when the occasion arises.

If we cease to consider the peasant especially, and enlarge our field of investigation so as to include the Great Russians of all classes, we are struck at every turn by a duality, a blend, a mixture of contradictory elements, which is no less striking than the blend of humaneness and insensibility which is so peculiarly characteristic of the peasant. We are struck by a lack of discipline which produces an easy-going *laissez-aller*, happy-go-lucky, "what does it matter?" spirit. Combined with this spirit, which in Russia goes by the name of *Nichevo*, we find instances of fierce energy and relentless persistence and patience in the face of obstacles: for instance, in the career of Peter the Great and Suvorov; in the manner in which an ordinary Russian workman or peasant will throw himself into a given arduous task; in

phenomena such as the defence of Sevastopol, or the transport of troops over the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The Russian workman gives evidence every now and then of a kind of extra flip of energy, a power of accomplishing a little more than the maximum—this is a trait characteristic of young nationalities, of the Americans, for instance.

I was once watching in a village in Central Russia the installation of a steam-engine. An artisan had come from Germany, from Bremen, in order to put it together and to set it going. After the machine had been satisfactorily installed, the German artisan went away, leaving instructions that it should be fed with fuel gradually and carefully and slowly. The fuel was straw; the instructions of the German were carried out, with the result that the heat generated was not sufficient to make the machine work. During the whole day after his departure the machine remained obstinately inert. The next day I visited the machine and found it busily working. I asked one of the workmen how the result had been achieved; he answered, " We were told to heat it German fashion [*po niemetski*]—slowly and gradually; and that wouldn't do, so we thought we would try to heat it Russian fashion [*po russki*] "—and here he made a gesture with his arm which signified " go-the-whole-hog "—" and so we put in a mass of straw and it worked famously."

This remark struck me as being extraordinarily characteristic. By " Russian fashion," he meant the extra flip, the superabundant, just more than the maximum touch, which leads men to overcome a difficulty.

A striking instance of this is the behaviour of peasants in a crisis, such as the putting out of a fire, when it is spreading, with the aid of a high wind, through a village. I have assisted at several such scenes. The energy displayed in saving what is possible, in destroying what it is necessary to destroy in order to check and limit the spread of the flames, is fantastic, almost superhuman. I have never seen such energy, such dogged persistence and inspired courage, because it must be borne in mind that the fight is an unequal one; the fire is often on a large scale; the fire-engines are small and inadequate. Everything depends on human energy. And what is peculiarly striking is that the Russians, who often lack individual initiative, have in a high degree that power of co-operative energy. They work altogether

naturally without feeling the need of any special leader. I remember a striking instance of this kind in the Russo-Japanese War, in the retreat from Ta-shi-chao, when the retreat of a vast number of transport was effected without any supervising control; it seemed to go in perfect order, automatically. Colonel Gädke, the German War Expert, who was a witness of this, told me at the time that he considered this automatic co-operation very remarkable, and he doubted whether German soldiers would be capable of similar behaviour in similar circumstances.

Another instance of the energy of the Russians in critical circumstances was afforded to the world by the Messina earthquake. Any one who read the correspondence which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* at the time will remember the almost miraculous energy displayed by the Russian sailors in the work of saving people from the ruins. Eye-witnesses confirmed to me the stories which appeared in the newspapers at the time with regard to the fabulous agility, the perseverance, and the adventurous courage of the Russian sailors.

I have heard from Englishmen who live in Sicily that the Sicilians added the exploits of the Russian sailors to their national legends and classed them with Scylla, Charybdis, Mount Etna, Proserpine, and Pluto. One eye-witness, an Englishman, also told me that he was struck by two things: the tenderness the Russian sailor displayed to the wounded and sick, how he nursed and tended the women and children; and the ruthlessly calm manner in which he disposed of looters and robbers as so much vermin. This illustrates what I have said about the peasants. Any one who has ever witnessed a fire in a Russian village and seen the peasants leap into the dangerous places, hack and hew down what is superfluous and perilous, and save what can be saved, whether persons, animals, or chattels, will not be surprised by the record of the Russian sailors at Messina.

Closely allied to what I called this "extra flip" of energy is the disposition in the Russian character to go beyond the limit, or rather not to recognize any boundary line. This perhaps proceeds from a lack of self-discipline, but whatever may be the cause, it is a common phenomenon in Russia. The Russian in a hundred ways likes to "go the whole hog."

There is a poem of Alexis Tolstoi which expresses this sentiment, and which runs like this :—

"Love without slinking doubt and love your best ;
And threaten, if you threaten, not in jest ;
And if you lose your temper, lose it all,
And let your blow straight from the shoulder fall ;
In altercation, boldly speak your view,
And punish but when punishment is due ;
With both your hands forgiveness give away ;
And if you feast, feast till the break of day."

Thus, for instance, I have often seen aged men of the professional class, once they began to play cards, continuing to play all night. Only the other day I heard of an instance of some people playing cards for thirty-six hours, without stopping except for brief intervals for food. Nowhere is time, or rather the ordinary prejudices with regard to the limits imposed by time, of so little account as in Russia.

If a Russian company are interested in a card game, they will go on playing until they have had enough ; it will not occur to any one to say, " We ought to stop now because it is too late," or " It is really time that we should go to bed." The same thing is true in matters of food and drink. The thought that enough is as good as a meal, the maxim of " Seek to have rather less than more," is contrary to the Russian temperament. On the contrary, in order to enjoy himself he will aim at having more than less. He is convinced that " enough " and a " feast " are two totally different and distinct things, and that for a " feast " a great deal more than enough is necessary.

Intellectually, this same quality manifests itself to a very remarkable degree. The Russian is adventurous and daring in the domain of thought and of ideas. He is often " timide par le caractère et hardi par le pensée." He recognizes no conventional limit or boundary ; he will follow his thought to its logical conclusion ; and when the conclusion seems to lead to a *reductio ad absurdum* he will swallow the " absurdum " with a " Why not ? "

For instance, I remember once hearing a Russian argue against marriage ; after he had been developing his theory for some time, somebody objected that if it were carried into practice it would mean the end of the world. " But that's just what I want," he answered.

In direct contrast to this adventurous audacity, in the region of ideas, the Russian is often distinguished by timidity, prudence, and want of initiative in the affairs of everyday life. He will often display a horror of responsibility and a fear in the face of authority; a dislike of initiative, of striking out a new line; a blend of suspicion and fear of persons who seem ready to take responsibility on themselves and to signalize themselves by any act of initiative or independence. Take any administrative body in Russia, the County Councils, for instance, and one will find that their proceedings are distinguished by an exaggerated spirit of prudence and caution.

The ordinary Russian is essentially a democrat. He is democratic in the good as well as in the bad sense of the word. When I say the bad sense of the word I mean that particular side of the democratic spirit which leads him to fear and to dislike the man who rises above the average, who speaks out and gives proof of moral independence and courage. This contrast between his intellectual audacity and his timidity of conduct corresponds to the contrast between the capacity of violent energy, which he at times displays, and the inclination which he equally often displays towards indolence and happy-go-lucky *laissez-aller*.

So on all sides, and at every turn, we are brought back to something twofold, to a contradiction, and a contrast which tempts one to accept the paradox and to pass on.

Not only do these contradictory qualities exist side by side, but they often manifest themselves in rapid succession, in swift alternatives. There is often something spasmodic here; the Russian will pass rapidly from one mood to another, from despair to a wild gaiety, from apathy to energy, from resignation to revolt, and from rebellion to submission. Again, the Great Russian peasant is convinced above all things that he must make hay while the sun shines, that summer is short, and the time for agricultural labour brief. This leads him to work hard for a short period, to achieve much in a short time, and then to do nothing in the autumn and winter. The result is there is no people who is capable of making so sharp an effort during a short time, and no people with so little aptitude for continuous and regular hard work.

He will also easily be taken with a sudden mania, for a person,

a thing, a book, an idea, or an occupation, and equally suddenly drop it.

The system of government has not seldom underlined this propensity by its action. At one time, for instance, it would encourage a certain train of thought; special books and ideals in all the schools of Russia; and at another time it would order these schools to burn what they had adored and to adore what it had burned. M. Leroy Beaulieu accounts for these rapid alternating moods and abrupt contrasts and changes by the influence of the climate. He maintains that these sudden and rapid changes are the reflection of the extremes of climate, the long cold winter, the torrid summer, and the spring and the autumn during which one experiences often from day to day changes from extreme heat to extreme cold. The theory seems plausible, but one might quote instances of other climates which are equally mutable and fickle and equally rich in abrupt changes and sharply contrasted extremes, but which fail to have a similar effect on the inhabitants of the countries to which they belong.

The contrasts of climate, for instance, must be equally sharp in Canada and America, and the Canadians and Americans do not afford such startling examples of mobility and variability of temperament. Whatever may be the cause of it, this mobility is characteristic of the Russian, and closely allied to it is what is probably his most marked characteristic, what is in part the hallmark of all the Slav races.

This is the Russian plasticity—his malleability and ductility, from which proceed his power of comprehension, assimilation, and imitation, and a corresponding lack of originality and creative power; a great deal of human charity and moral indulgence, and a corresponding absence of discipline and a tendency towards laxity; an absence of hypocrisy, and often a corresponding lack of tight moral fibre; a faculty of all-round adaptability, moral and physical, and an unlimited suppleness of mind.

The application of Taine's doctrine of the *faculté maîtresse* has generally the savour of something arbitrary; but whether this group of qualities, which can be best summed up in the word "plasticity," be the mainspring of the Russian temperament or not, it is certainly one of its most salient features. This plasticity makes at the same time for strength and for weakness, but

it is complemented and corrected by something else and something different, which I will come to presently. Let us for the moment discuss the result of this plasticity, which has always been dwelt on by all students of the Russian character and nation, whether Russian or foreign.

Dostoievski, giving it the name of "all-humanness," said it was the main feature of the Russian nation. M. Leroy Beaulieu is inclined to think it is the *faculté maîtresse* of the Russians.[1] Professor Miliukov, in a book on Russia written especially for Western Europeans, dwells on its importance at the very outset of his work, and in commenting on it adds the profoundly suggestive remark that the Russian lacks the "cement of hypocrisy"—a saying I have often quoted before, but which is too illuminating to be omitted from any survey of the Russian character. Some critics have questioned the existence of this plasticity among the peasantry. This does not coincide with my experience. I have found the Russian workman quick in understanding what is needed of him, and versatile in his power of being able to turn his hand to different trades.

I know an illiterate peasant who, after having served under a French cook, reproduced, and now still reproduces, to the delight of the richer peasants when they employ his services on festive occasions, the finished simplicity, taste, and excellence of the best French cooking. Among the peasants and the soldiers (who are peasants) I have seen astonishingly versatile men—men capable at the same time of cooking an excellent dinner, of mending a watch, of making fireworks, and of painting scenery for a theatre. In casual conversations with peasants and workmen all over the country, I have never found myself up against a brick wall of obstinate non-comprehension, but I have had rather the experience of being constantly met half-way. Foreign architects and various other foreign employers of labour have told me that they find as a rule the Russian artisan adaptable, and quick to understand and carry out a new idea.

As to the suppleness of mind of the Russian in general, of any class, I have never ceased to be astonished by it. Explain to a Russian something of which he is ignorant, a game of cards, an idiomatic or slang expression in a foreign language, indefinable

[1] "La souplesse de son intelligence paraît sans limite, et cette aisance à tout s'approprier a pu faire obstacle au développement spontané de l'originalité nationale."—Leroy Beaulieu, Vol. I.

in precise terms, such as, for instance, " prig," and you will be astonished at the way in which he at once grasps the point at issue ; if it is a game, all the various possibilities and combinations ; if it is a word or an expression, the shade and value of its meaning.

Try the same experiment with an intelligent German, and you will be astonished at the result.

Another notable instance of this is the appreciation on the part of the Russians of the comic genius of foreign countries, which so often remains a closed and sealed book to outsiders. Witness the popularity in Russia of books whose whole point lies in the *national* quality of their humour, such as, for instance, the works of Jerome K. Jerome, W. W. Jacobs, the plays of Bernard Shaw, the stories of Rudyard Kipling, the essays of G. K. Chesterton. Translations of Mr. Shaw's plays are now popular in Russia, and they are, besides this, being frequently produced ; but it is a curious fact that it is the humour of them that pleases, and not their serious import. As long as only such plays as *Mrs. Warren's Profession* were produced, and stress was laid exclusively on the serious side of the author (for instance, during the revolution some theatre had the preposterous idea—such was the fanatical state of mind of the intellectual bourgeoisie at that time—of producing *The Devil's Disciple* as a revolutionary political play!), he failed to achieve popularity. Now it is different. Since Mr. Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra* was produced at the Moscow State Theatre, and a complete edition of his plays obtained a cheap circulation, the public had the opportunity of tasting the full savour of his work, and it was instantly appreciated. And the point is that what pleased and attracted was the Irish wit which is peculiar to Mr. Bernard Shaw, and not the problems or the sociology with which the Russians have been sated, not to say glutted, during the last fifty years.

With regard to this faculty of comprehension, there is another point of interest which I have often noticed. An all-round development of faculties is much more common in Russia than in other countries. It is much rarer to find in Russia a man who has certain qualities strongly developed and others utterly non-existent, than a man who is developed at all points and on all sides to a certain extent.

In England, for instance, it is common to find a man who is a brilliant Latin scholar, and at the same time incapable of adding two and two, and equally ignorant of higher mathematics or any kindred sciences. Or again, a man who is fond of literature and tone-deaf to music or vice versâ, or a man who has an innate understanding of all the physical sciences, or anything to do with mechanics and engineering, and is at the same time totally uninterested in letters or art. In Russia it is much commoner to meet with the type who possesses the rudiments of mathematics, an outline of scientific knowledge and philosophy, as well as a general groundwork of literature, and a smattering of music and art. This is partly the result of an innate versatility, and partly the result of a bureaucratic and democratic system of education. It cuts both ways; and what is gained in comprehensiveness is lost by a corresponding lack of individual originality and a corresponding superficiality.

I have frequently come across Russians who were ashamed if they were caught ignorant of some new or old manifestation in foreign art, literature, or music; they seemed to feel that they had thereby proved themselves lacking in the necessary amount of "culture" which every educated man is bound to possess.

Indeed, the Russian word for "culture" (*obrazovanie* [1]) plays an important part with educated Russians. Several Russian landowners and doctors whom I met during the war, used often to say that they considered a man who had no mathematics could not conceivably be called "cultivated." But this so-called culture, although it may in some cases be the rich fruit of a comprehensive mind—if it is allied to studiousness and curiosity—is often the superficial and barren result of a bureaucratic education.

This is one instance of the mixed results of the Russian "plasticity." Let us now consider some of the others. I have said the quality made at the same time for strength and for weakness, and that the quality as a whole was complemented and corrected by something of another kind. What are its elements of strength, its positive qualities? In the first place and most important is perhaps the large and warm humanity which proceeds from

[1] *Obraz* means a pattern; "culture" in Russian practically means education according to pattern and up to sample.

this all-embracing plasticity. The humanity of the Russian people is rich and generous, and its richness, generosity, and warmth give it a strong driving power.

Somebody once prophesied a few years ago that in the future the Americans and the Russians would carry everything before them because of their sheer warmth of heart.

Closely allied to this quality, so that it is, in fact, a part of it, is their Christian charity, their sympathy, which is by far their most pleasing and attractive trait. It enables them not only to exercise a large tolerance towards the failings and foibles of their fellow-creatures, but to understand people different from themselves, and to extract from them and to assimilate what may be profitable to themselves. The second positive result of the Russian plasticity which makes for strength is this: their power of adapting themselves to foreign people, things, places, and circumstances, to what is new, makes them excellent colonists. This is why it is impossible to prophesy what new developments may arise among the Russian people, what turn its history may take, because their adaptability may expand at any moment to larger spheres, from science to politics and political institutions. It opens a wide field. For Russia and the Russian people there is still a vast stretch of "fresh woods and pastures new," and the Russian, with his peculiar adaptability, has before him vast fields of exploration in every department of life. The career of Peter the Great proves what the Russian temperament is capable of, when the adventurous and adaptable quality of his nature predominates, and exercises free play.

It is, again, perhaps the absence of limits and bars in his nature which accounts for the quality of his energy, when he is energetic. Just as in the region of speculation he will be ready to push his ideas to their logical conclusion, so in the field of action, when he happens to be adventurous and energetic, he will recognize no obstacles and no limits. He will accomplish miracles, he will make bricks without straw, with gusto and spirit. This is the strong feature of the Russian genius. This is what distinguishes Peter the Great from all other monarchs of genius, Suvorov and Skobeliev from other generals of genius, Pushkin from other writers of genius, the Russian engineers from other engineers of genius, the Russian dancers from other dancers of genius. A dash, a go, an extra flip of energy, a disregard of the

inadequacy of the means at hand, a scorn of obstacles and difficulties, a desperate determination to accomplish the end in view.

I think I have now summed up, as far as it is possible to do in a brief summary, the positive qualities making for strength which are the result of the Russian temperament.

Now let us look at the other side: the weakness and defects of the qualities.

I have already mentioned the superficiality of culture arising from the bureaucratic ideal of an all-round culture. Another facet of the humanity of the Russian which makes for weakness is his indulgence: the frequent absence of backbone which Professor Miliukov so happily calls the "lack of the cement of hypocrisy." This, of course, cannot help often resulting in laxity, slovenliness, indolence, waste of energy, waste of time, waste of money, disorder, and anarchy. It means that a lower standard is often acquiesced in, when a higher standard is called for by the circumstances; it means that important questions are often settled by a "What does it matter?" That discipline is not enforced in circumstances when an exact enforcement of discipline is important. I have dwelt on this subject elsewhere in connection with the war and otherwise, and I will not further enlarge on it; an absence of hypocrisy which leads one man to accept another with all his qualities and defects exactly as he is, and so far from blaming him, to understand his weaknesses and to sympathize with them, relying on finding in others, and being certain of receiving from others, a similar measure of indulgence towards his own failings, cannot help having exactly the same result, as Professor Miliukov said, as the absence of cement has on a building.

The building would fall to pieces were this absence of cement not counteracted by the positive qualities which I have already discussed.

Again, the absence of bars and limits in the Russian nature, while it may account at times for the driving power of his energy, is the cause at others of unbridledness of conduct and ideas, of a lack of balance, of extravagant excesses, of a want of consecutiveness in conduct and opinion, a tendency to extreme reactions of mood, to bouts of energy succeeded by bouts of apathy, of rapid alternatives between enthusiasm and scepticism, and of a

tendency to give in, to overrate the enemy, and to underestimate and misappreciate one's own strength and capacities.

I noticed this particularly in the war. The officers fell quickly from unwarrantable hope into an altogether unwarrantable pessimism. They failed to take into account that if their own situation was difficult, there was no reason to assume that that of the enemy must necessarily be altogether satisfactory; that if mistakes were being made on their side, that was no proof that the enemy was infallible; and this unwarrantable pessimism had more than once—and especially in the case of the battle of Liaoyang—a fatal influence on their conduct of the campaign, as well as on the *morale* of the troops.

Another result of the Russian plasticity, which makes for weakness, is the lack of discipline which results from it. The most broadly known fact about the Russian people to-day is its struggle for political liberty: the despotism which has existed in the past; the various efforts made to destroy it, at first by individuals, then by movements, and finally by a greater part of the educated classes of the nation, culminating in a revolution which lasted sporadically for three years.

Now, the lack of political liberty, or the comparative lack of it, compared with that enjoyed by other countries, and the failure of the Russian people to obtain it, in the measure which they desired, when in great numbers they set about to try and do so, seems to me solely and simply due to the absence of personal discipline in the individual Russian, and especially in the Russian of the educated professional middle-class, who was the prime factor in the revolutionary movement.

Political liberty cannot exist without discipline; and the average professional middle-class Russian in throwing himself into the struggle for political liberty, refused to sacrifice one jot or atom of the personal liberty, *liberté de mœurs*, which he had enjoyed to a greater extent than the inhabitants of any other European country, and which was not only incompatible with discipline, but strongly conducive to a despotic behaviour as far as his fellow-creatures were concerned. There is no country in the world where the individual enjoys so great a measure of personal liberty, where the *liberté de mœurs* is so great as it is in Russia; where the individual man can do as he pleases with so little interference or criticism on the part of his neighbours;

where there is so little moral censorship, where liberty of abstract thought or æsthetic production is so great.

Nobody, for instance, would dream in Russia of calling a man in a public position to task for the irregularities of his private life; such irregularities, whether he is divorced, or whether he has an unofficial family, are matters of profound indifference to him. The censorship of the theatre, such as exists in England, would be incredible to a Russian. Political and religious censure there have existed, and at one time they weighed heavily on the Press, but to forbid a play of Maeterlinck or Ibsen or Bernard Shaw, on the ground that it might have an undermining effect on the morals of the public, would be an unheard-of thing in Russia.

Again, the Press often discusses with the utmost freedom matters which are not mentioned in English newspapers, and as for books, there is no subject which they will fight shy of.

Certain thinkers have agreed that personal liberty—liberty of thought and of manners—always flourishes more freely under a political despotism than under a political democracy. Renan, for instance, cites the régime of Nero in this respect, which he compares favourably, as far as liberty of thought is concerned, with the stringent censorship exercised by the Athenian Government in its prime.

There are certain thinkers who consider such liberty of thought and manners to be a more precious boon than any amount of voting privileges and indirect control over official administration, State legislation, and State expenditure. However that may be, one thing is certain: in order to obtain political liberty, a certain measure of this unlimited freedom of conduct, behaviour, and manners, on the part of the individual, must necessarily be sacrificed. The Russian intellectual bourgeoisie, the Russian proletariat, and, above all, the Russian militant revolutionaries, failed to see the matter in this light; and by their arbitrary conduct, their inability to sacrifice party spirit, personal and class interests and jealousies to the interests of the community; by their failure to act with sufficient discipline to ensure a necessary minimum of order and co-operation; by obstinately refusing to take into account the interests of their fellow-creatures, if they happened to be at variance with the theories they were propounding, they succeeded in estranging,

and finally in losing, the support of public opinion at large, which they had had behind them at the outset, and in rendering a revolution, which should change the whole system of government, impossible.

They certainly achieved something, and what they did achieve was the result of temporary co-operation and temporary discipline, which were, however, of short duration.

Disinclination to submit to discipline is one of the negative results of the Russian "plasticity"; whether it is a fault or a quality I do not pretend to determine. Everybody is at liberty to hold his own views on the subject; but it is certainly the negation of political liberty and the chief obstacle the Russians have to overcome in its achievement.

I think I may be said now to have mentioned the more important weaknesses which accompany, or perhaps are the result of, the virtues of the Russian quality of "plasticity." Another element in the Russian character remains to be considered which is the very opposite of plasticity.

There may be a hundred intangible influences and currents which correct this malleability; but in the case of the Great Russian, the quality of an opposite kind to plasticity and malleability which first leaps to the mind, and which is the most salient, is his spirit of positivism and realism. I say the Great Russian, because not only among the other Slav races, but also among the Poles and the Little Russians, this quality is conspicuously absent. It is perhaps the result of the admixture of Finnish alloy in the Great Russian metal; or perhaps it is the result of the severer climate; or, more likely still, of both. It permeates all classes of Great Russians. With the peasants it takes the form of a broad common sense. Shrewdness and common, practical sense are the qualities by which he sets the highest store; great is his scorn for a man "without a Tsar in his head," as his own proverb says. The Russian peasant has a large store of proverbs which are the apt and often the picturesque expression of a shrewd and practical wisdom. On the other hand, it is difficult to get a Russian peasant to understand an abstract word. I once had a discussion with a peasant about "distance." He said, "I suppose that is what we call *versts*."

Even in his religion, and especially in the observance of it, the Russian peasant will display a solid matter-of-factness.

This positive quality, this realism, which is solid, substantial, and rooted in the earth, and alien and inimical to what is abstract and metaphysical, is apparent everywhere among the Great Russians: in their songs, in their folklore, in their fairy tales, in their literature, their drama, their art, and their poetry. Compare the most romantic poets of Russia, Lermontov and Pushkin, for instance, with the romantic poets of other countries; it is like comparing pictures of the Dutch School with pictures by Blake. Lermontov is more closely akin in spirit to Thackeray than to Shelley and Byron, and Pushkin to Stendal than to Victor Hugo and Musset. Simplicity, naturalness, closeness to fact and to nature, realism not in any narrow sense of this or that æsthetic school, but in the sense of love of reality and nearness to it, are the main distinctive qualities of all Russian art: from the epic songs of the fifteenth century and the fairy tales handed down from immemorial tradition by word of mouth, down to the novels of Tolstoi and Turgeniev, the fables of Krylov, the poems of Nekrasov, the tales of Gorki, and the plays of Ostroyski and of Chekov.[1]

This positivism, this practical spirit, this innate realism, acts as a powerful antidote to the Slav plasticity and flexibility. It is the hard kernel in a soft fruit. It accounts for the tough element in the Great Russian, his spirit of resource and practical success in dealing with men and things, his tenacity and stubbornness.

Therefore, if I were asked to sum up as briefly as possible the characteristics of the Great Russian, I should do so thus: I will put the positive and negative qualities in parallel tables.

	Positive	Negative
1. Plasticity — resulting in:	(*a*) Humaneness.	Indulgence and laxity.
	(*b*) Assimilation.	Lack of originality.
	(*c*) Suppleness of mind.	Superficiality.
	(*d*) Absence of hypocrisy.	Lack of backbone.
	(*e*) Liberty of thought and of *mœurs*.	Lack of individual discipline and consequently of political liberty.

[1] "Selon la remarque d'un de ses écrivains, c'est dans les peines séculaires de la colonisation de la Grande Russie que s'est formée cette disposition à voir en toute chose le but immédiat et le côté réel de la vie. . . . Il règne dans la nation, dans les sphères instruites comme dans les masses ignorantes, un positivisme plus ou moins réfléchi."—Leroy Beaulieu.

	Positive	Negative
2. Absence of bonds, bars, and barriers (which may be said to be closely allied to plasticity).	(*a*) Spasmodic energy	Extravagance of conduct and a lack of sense of proportion and balance.
	(*b*) Audacity of thought.	Timidity of conduct. Abrupt alternations and transitions from energy to indolence, from optimism to pessimism, and from revolt to submission. Fear of responsibility.
3. Positivism — Realism and common sense.	(*a*) Patience and unity of purpose.	Lack of individuality, independence, and of civic courage.
	(*b*) Co-operative energy.	

I think I could substantiate this list by many examples; but when all is said and done, generalizations are unsatisfactory and misleading things, for human nature, and especially the Russian character, is complex and subtle—*ondoyant et divers*.

And yet, although generalizations are misleading, they are, I know from experience, often as welcome to the reader as they are tempting to the writer. For if they happen to be suggestive they give the critic a stone to sharpen his wits on, and they provide the serious with a text and the careless with a catchword. And there is nothing the careless reader likes so much as a catchword. It saves him the bother of reading the book while enabling him to discuss it. It is for this reason that I will close this chapter of generalizations with one final generalization. It is this: If we were asked to name three English types which in English history or fiction, between them summed up the English character, and supposing we said, Henry VIII, John Milton, and Mr. Pickwick—what three Russian types, in history and fiction, would correspond to them, and sum up the Russian character?

I for one would answer Peter the Great, Prince Mwyshkin, and Khlestakov. And I would add that in almost every Russian you will find elements of all of these three characters.

I will sum up their characteristics as briefly as possible for those who are unacquainted with them, for Mwyshkin and Khlestakov belong to fiction. Peter the Great I have dealt with at

length in a chapter that is to come. Suffice it to say here that he was an unparalleled craftsman, the incarnation of energy; unbridled in all things; humane, but subject to electric explosions of rage; he spoke well, wrote badly, and drank deep. He made bricks without straw; he did everything himself. He was an apprentice to the day of his death, and never an amateur.

Prince Mwyshkin is the hero of one of Dostoievski's novels. He is a so-called "idiot," a "pure fool" only with this difference, that he is not a fool. The weapons and vices of the world fall powerless from off his disinterestedness; his ingenuousness sees through the stratagems of the crafty and the deceits of the cunning; his love is stronger than the hatred of his fellow-creatures; his sympathy more effective than their spite; he is an oasis in an arid world; he is simple, sensible, and acute, and these qualities are the branches of a plant which is rooted in goodness.

Khlestakov is the hero of a famous play by Gogol, "The Government Inspector," and I cannot do better than quote Gogol's own summary of the character:

"About twenty-three, thin, small, rather silly; with, as they say, no Tsar in his head; one of those men who in the public offices are called 'utterly null.' He talks and acts with the utmost irrelevance; without the slightest forethought or consecutiveness. He is incapable of fixing and concentrating his attention on any idea whatsoever."

Besides this he, in some respects, reminds one of the description of Commander Sin in the *Modern Traveller*:—

"Lazy and somewhat of a liar;
A trifle slovenly in dress;
A little prone to drunkenness;
A gambler also to excess,
And never known to pay."

Now as a final generalization I say that in every Russian there is something of Peter the Great, of Mwyshkin, and of Khlestakov.

CHAPTER V

SOME MANNERS AND CUSTOMS PECULIAR TO RUSSIA

THE customs of the Russian people, or rather those customs which are peculiar to them, are perhaps better known in Western Europe than anything else to do with Russia, since every man who has ever travelled in Russia cannot help noticing them; and they are difficult to misunderstand.

Most people have heard that the Russian peasant likes steam-baths, drinks tea in the manner of Dr. Johnson, has a utensil called the *samovar*, and is inordinately fond of drinking a strong spirit called *vodka*.

In spite of this, I will be faithful to the purpose I set myself at the beginning to take nothing for granted, at the risk of repeating what is already familiar to my readers. I will begin with food. The Russian peasant feeds almost exclusively on black bread made of rye, and on a kind of porridge, made either of buckwheat or of millet, called *kasha*. He very seldom eats meat. On this seemingly meagre sustenance he is capable of abnormally hard work in the summer. He will work during the harvest in the fields for sixteen hours at a stretch at an almost super-human pitch. The following is an interesting point: when a soldier returns to his native village, it has been noticed that he is quite incapable of working up to the standard of the peasants who have remained in the village. Now, the soldier arrives seemingly the perfection of physical fitness, and he has enjoyed two solid meat meals a day. And it is not merely a question of a few days' inferiority, in which case the change would account for it, but he will continue to be below the level of the peasant, who has stayed at home, for some time.

The fasts ordained by the Church still further diminish the

gross quantity of food absorbed by the Russian peasant. Peter Bruce, a Scotch officer in the service of Peter the Great, describes in his Memoirs the fasts of the Russian peasant as follows :—

"No religion in the world could well be conceived to impose a more severe mortification on its possessors than the Russian; for, if it were not sufficient to have enjoined the keeping of two constant fast days in the week: Wednesday and Friday, and the eves before holidays, when they are obliged to abstain strictly from all kinds of flesh, and they may not taste butter or eggs or milk, they have four Lents every year; the longest is of seven weeks, the first of which is called the *butter* week, and that being their carnival, they have liberty for all manner of food except fish."

This description still holds good. It is during the *butter* week that pancakes called *bliny* (made without sugar) are baked. They are exceedingly satisfying, and people have been known to die of the quantity of *bliny* they eat.

The Russians have two national drinks, *kvass* and tea. *Kvass* is made either of bread, apples, or cranberries, slightly fermented. The *samovar* is not a teapot, as people often think, but a tea-urn, warmed from within by hot charcoal, and containing boiling water. There is no peasant, however poor, who is without a *samovar*. The peasant drinks tea weak and in great quantities; he will nibble a piece of sugar separately, and drink the tea out of a saucer. Besides tea and *kvass*, there is *vodka*, a spirit made of potatoes. The large consumption of it is one of the most important social problems in Russia to-day. *Vodka* is a Government monopoly. It can only be bought in a Government shop, which is only open at certain stated hours, and each bottle bears the stamp of the Government. The idea in making it a monopoly was that since you could not prevent the peasant from drinking, he should at least drink a pure spirit undiluted with paraffin. Before the monopoly was made, not only anybody could sell *vodka*, but anybody could sell what he pleased to call *vodka*. There are no public-houses in Russia—that is to say, no house where people can buy spirits and consume them on the premises; on the other hand, there are numberless tea-houses. I have myself seen peasants in a tea-house surreptitiously send for a teapot full of *vodka*. The introduction of the monopoly, although

it has improved the quality of the liquor sold, has not decreased the quantity consumed.

The sale of spirits brings into the Treasury so large a yearly revenue that nearly half the Budget is guaranteed by it.

Another common article in Russian food is cucumber; also fresh and pickled soup made from fermented cabbage, called *shchi*, and water-melons. And a habit quite peculiar to the Russians is the chewing of sunflower seeds. Sunflowers are grown largely in Russia for utilitarian purposes, chiefly for the oil that is in them; but they are useful in a number of ways. If you travel in early autumn in Russia you will notice on the platforms of the stations that nearly all the peasants are chewing something, and spitting something on to the ground. These are dried sunflower seeds. You bite the seed and spit out the husk, and eat the kernel, which is white. It is a universal habit among the lower classes in Russia, and distracts them like smoking. At a peasants' ball sunflower seeds are handed round on a plate as a refreshment.

Beer is drunk largely, but not much among the lower classes. Peasants and soldiers have often said to me, "We do not prize that drink" ("*My eto nie uvazhaem*"). They prefer what they call wine, namely *vodka*. When a peasant goes in for a regular drinking bout, it takes three days: one day to get drunk, one day to be drunk, and one day to recover.

The cure for the headache resulting from drunkenness is accepted to be *vodka* with a piece of pickled herring; and I have often been asked in the streets for money (*na pokhmelie*) for the headache, the man meaning that he was drunk the day before. In villages, however, unless there is some great occasion which is being feasted, when the peasants will drink themselves senseless, they prefer to be slightly drunk, to walk about feeling happy and cheerful, singing.

Their national instrument is the accordion. When there is a dance or a wedding, or any feast of any kind, the accordion-player is called, and he plays on and on untiringly, lilting never-ending tunes.

There is also the three-stringed guitar, called the *balalaika*, and orchestras composed of players on the *balalaika*, who have been heard in London; but you rarely see this instrument among the peasantry, although soldiers and sailors are expert players.

The Russian peasant is musical; he is fond of song and dance; and in nearly every small tavern or eating-house in the towns there is now a gramophone. There is no country in the world where the demand for gramophones is so large. In the richer restaurants there used to be a great barrel-organ, or orchestrion, but these now are generally replaced by a stringed orchestra.

Russians of all classes are generally musical. The seats in the opera-house on a night when a good singer is singing are sold out long beforehand, and the audience is frantically persistent and enthusiastic in its demands for encores.

Dancing is another great feature among the peasants. The dances preferred are step-dances, performed by separate dancers, sometimes two at a time. The dancing of the Russian Imperial Ballet is now too well known to need even mentioning. But I have seen in villages exceedingly skilled dancers, whose neatness of foot and sense of rhythm were remarkable.

But more important than the dance is song. The folk-songs of Russia—the old songs taken down in the country, and not the quasi-folk-songs of quite modern date, like "The Red Sarafan"—have been collected by musicians and savants of the first rank, such as Balakirev, Rimski-Korsakov, etc. If any one chances to read this who is interested in such things, he cannot do better than get Balakirev's collection of folk-songs. The oldest form of national poetry in Russia were the *Buyliny*, which are national epics, very long, generally unrhymed, dealing with the deeds and exploits of heroes. The music is a chant which accompanies one line or two lines of the song, constantly repeating itself to the end. Many of these *Buyliny* have come down to us, and some of them lament in accents of impassioned grief the death of Ivan the Terrible.

Besides these, there are the *Horovodi*, or choral songs, which celebrate the change of the seasons, festivals of the Church, or various peasant occupations. They are sung thus: the first voice sings a melody, the other voices in turn sing variants of the same melody, and so a kind of harmony arises from the falling in of the voices, but each part retains its independence.

These songs are not—and most Russian musicians say they never were—sung in unison; but they always had a popular counterpoint, and the secondary parts are really an imitation of the melody. You will hear (and I have myself often heard)

choruses of this kind sung by workmen who are hauling a rope, or cutting down a tree, or performing some other special occupation.

Again, when the soldiers sing, the first voice always begins the melody and plays the part of a conductor with his hand, the other voices breaking in when the first phase is finished.

Then there are the ordinary solo-songs, which are often sung to the accompaniment of accordion or *balalaika*. These are often exceedingly beautiful, and the greatest composers have used some of their melodies. They are generally melancholy and have a wailing iterance, a questioning wistfulness, expressive of an infinite heart-ache; they never seem to finish; they end abruptly and as if they were meant to be taken up again directly and continued for ever.

Sometimes, on the other hand, they have a delicious trotting gaiety, a constant increase of pace, as if there were no end to the spirits and the exuberant bubbling enjoyment and gusto of the singer.

The rhythm of the Russian song is, as a rule, extremely irregular; the phases are of unequal length; they are frequently in 1-4 or 5-4 time, or 2-4—3-4 time alternating. The division into bars is arbitrary; since the original tunes owed their rhythm to the cadences suggested by the words. This is why it often happens that the folk-song written down poorly represents the song as it is sung; the songs are based on a natural scale, which it is impossible for us to represent in our notation, but which is akin to the ecclesiastical Phrygian mode. The oldest existing Slavonic melodies are indeed based on the Greek scales, and these Russian folk-songs show the influence of the Greek theory of music rather than that of the East. The Tartar influence is also visible, but more in the music of educated composers than in the folk-songs.

The charm of Russian songs is indescribable; whether it is the soldiers you hear singing, in chorus as they march or ride (for they sing as they ride), or a group of workmen hauling a rope on the banks of the Volga or in St. Petersburg (I have heard a beautiful chorus sung by workmen who were doing some repairs on the banks of the Moika canal in St. Petersburg), or a lonely voice coming from the village in the dark summer nights.

Once when I was returning from the Far East the train had

been obliged to stop at a small station owing to the general strike (in 1905), where it remained a week. More trains followed and stopped; and in the carriage of one of them were four singers—Little Russians, I think. Two of them were soldiers, and two of them *feldshers*—that is to say, hospital assistants; in this case Red Cross men. Their third-class carriage was next to the platform in the station, and the whole evening the men remained lying in their bunks, and sang in parts. Never have I heard such singing and such songs. It was like listening to a perfect quartet of stringed instruments; they sang together like one instrument, with a clean sharpness of take-off and perfect finish of phrasing.

They sang song after song, just for their own pleasure: sometimes soft and wailing melodies, aching heart-breaking questions to Fate, sometimes swift changing and trotting rhythms that made one think of wild ponies galloping over a plain; and their voices had a wonderful warmth and a richness, and they sang together as if their voices were twin spirits who knew and understood the intimate depths and possibilities of one another. I have heard many of the great professional singers, Russian, German, and Italian, and I have heard some of these musicians who have little voice but whose singing is better than that of the greatest operatic singers; but never has music given me more exquisite pleasure than the songs of these four soldiers and *feldshers*, who lay on their wooden bunks in a third-class carriage in the little station of Kuznetsk, and sang like birds, for the pleasure of it, in the dark, careless of audience or applause.

The existence of this beautiful folk-song in Russia raises a puzzling question of general interest, namely, that of the universal and general decay of folk-music in proportion to the spread of progress and education.

Our sailors no longer sing our beautiful old naval songs and the chanties whose words are as excellent as the music. They sing the songs of the music-halls with the same gusto as they used to sing "Charmoree, my charmoree, there's a ring-tailed monkey running up the rigging." Again, when I was travelling out to Manchuria in the same carriage with soldiers and sailors, one evening after the soldiers and sailors had sung some folk-songs, a sailor sang a song of his own invention, a sentimental ditty about an "unfortunate" who left the "palaces" of the rich and died in a hospital, which was very much akin in tune and

words to a song I afterwards heard at a big sing-song on board an English man-of-war, of which the culminating point was "Good God, I've killed my only son for greed of gold."

Now, the soldiers enjoyed this sentimental ditty more than all the rest. This tends to show that when the influence of the towns spreads, the airs of the music-hall spread with it and oust the folk-melodies, which are the products of the hills, the wood, the plains, and the river. The greatest composers cannot excel them, but they deem themselves happy if their art, or their inspiration, lets them achieve something approaching them in spontaneity and simplicity.

The English people have a natural genius for music-hall tunes; their music-hall tunes have a peculiar spring, go, and swing, which are entirely natural and which all the other countries of Europe imitate and imitate badly. One of the main facts about England is the genius of the English people for broad and sometimes inspired farce expressed in a catchy rhythm. Now, the Russians, the soldiers, and sailors, for instance, often sing broad and unprintable songs, but the music and rhythm remain those of the folk-songs. Therefore it will be a great pity when the day comes, which may quite well happen, that the repertory of the music-hall, which is a poor reflection and an artificial imitation of the English music-halls, spreads to the Russian country, to the peasants, the soldiers, and the sailors. Perhaps this will never happen. I am inclined to think that the peculiar quality of the Russian song is too deeply rooted in the nature of the Russian peasant ever to be ousted. But the continental music-hall repertory has not only reached but spread like a fever through all the educated classes of Russian society.

It is well known that the Russian peasant likes steam baths. It is perhaps less well known what these baths consist of. I cannot do better than again quote Henry Bruce, whose description of the *Bania* (steam baths) in the days of Peter the Great might, with a few differences of detail, have been written yesterday.

"They bathe frequently [he writes], . . . but the public bathing places are all built near the sides of rivers. [This is now no longer the case.] Their stoves are close places with furnaces, (the village Bania consists of a small, wooden, log-built

house with a stove in it), which they heat exceedingly, and for the better raising of vapour, frequently throw cold water on the stove; there are benches all round, at some distance one above the other, differing in degrees of heat, so that every one chooses the temperature that best suits him: upon one of those benches they lay themselves down at full length, quite naked, and having sweated as long as they think proper, they are well washed with warm water and well rubbed with handfuls of herbs. . . . But what is most admirable is, when they find the heat too intense, they will run out of the stove, naked as they are, plunge into the river and swim about in it for some time; if it is in winter they will roll in the snow."

The custom of the *Banii* in Russia is very old. It is as old as, or older than, Russian history. The Apostle Andrew is said to have noted their existence. And in the first records of Latin and Arabian writers of the existence of the Slavs, in the fifth century, we find it noted that they had the habit of steaming themselves and beating themselves with leaves. In the days of the Moscow Tsars, the going to the Bania was a State ceremony carried out with meticulous ritual, and one of the reasons for the unpopularity of Dimitri the Pretender was that he objected to the custom.

There is a *Bania* in every Russian village. The villagers go to it on Saturdays, to be ready for Sunday. It has been said in several books on Russia that after the baths they will put on their vermin-infected clothes again. But my own experience is that even the very poorest peasants will always endeavour to effect a change of *shirt*. It is considered most important. In the towns you see the lower classes flocking to the baths on Saturday, each man carrying a little bundle which contains a clean shirt. The same is true of the soldiers. This change of linen is considered an essential part of the bath. Of course, the peasants put on again their remaining clothes—coats, boots, etc.—because they have not a rich wardrobe. But even if in some cases they may not change their linen, the idea that it should be changed, that it is an essential part of the bath, is deeply rooted, and universally prevalent. It is considered that any *orthodox* Russian is bound to have a change of linen if he goes to the Bania. In Moscow there are enormous *Banii*, where poor people can get a bath for seven kopecks (about 1½d.).

It is perfectly clean and well-organized. The usual price of the first-class public baths for the richer classes is fifty kopecks (one shilling). And between these two extremes there is a second-class bath which costs fifteen kopecks (about threepence), and which varies very little in comfort from the first-class bath.

The habit of taking steam baths, as well as that of drinking *vodka*, is generally put down to the Russian climate, and I should think with good reason. It seems to suit the Russian peasant admirably.

The climate also accounts for the mortality, for Russia is one of the countries where the mortality is greatest; and also for the cases of longevity, which are more numerous in Russia than in other countries, for the climate and the manner of life hardens those who can resist it at all. It is among children that the mortality is greatest; and this arises not only from the rigour of the climate, but also from the state of sanitary conditions (generally deplorable), the general poverty, and the distrust of the people in doctors and their faith in quacks. These quacks are generally "wise women" and "wise men," called "znaharkhi." They often inspire boundless confidence. Sometimes their remedies—whether this be the result of faith on the part of the patient or of the science of the practitioner I do not know—are curiously successful, but often they are dangerously harmful.

In a village in the environs of Moscow, only an hour's journey from that city, a peasant told me that a wise woman had cured him from terrible agony caused by the kick of a horse, by applying an ointment and saying "a few words." He told me that he would not dream of going to a doctor, as doctors only cut you about. I have seen a man cured of rheumatism, and another cured of drink (unfortunately he relapsed after a few years); but more often these cures do more harm than good. Sometimes the wizard or wise woman gets hold of some powerful drug, like mercury, which they employ indiscriminately; but sometimes their remedies, the result of some simple tradition, some *remède de bonne femme*, forestall and anticipate the discoveries of modern science. The distrust of doctors is not so great now as it used to be. The hospitals now are generally full, and the doctor's consulting-room is crowded on market-days. But every now and then it breaks out in popular disturbances in the regions

affected by cholera, and this year (1910) there were several cases of the kind in the central districts of Russia, where troops had to be sent for to protect the doctors and their assistants.

The Russian peasant lives in unsanitary conditions. In winter he lives in a hermetically-sealed cottage, and he sleeps wrapped up in his sheep-skin, together with the whole of his family, on the top of the large stove. The dangerous period is the springtime, when the thaw discovers all the refuse that has been thrown into the snow in the winter. And yet the Russian peasant, who survives in the struggle for life, is healthy and strong. His teeth are beautifully clean and well-preserved. He is seldom sick.

Bruce, talking of the peasants, says :—

"Accustomed from their infancy to the extremes of heat and cold, they become both stout and hardy, and in general long-lived, little subject to any distemper: thus they live for the most part without physicians, and many of them without diseases. They begin their day at sun-rising and end at sun-setting, so their night begins as soon as the sun is down, and ends when it rises."

The Russian peasant marries young. The courtship takes place in the spring, and the wedding in the autumn. The wedding is the occasion for a great feast, lasting generally three days. The bridegroom and his friends walk about in the village playing accordions and drinking *vodka* in different houses, and throwing sugar to the children. If possible he will get horses to drive him to church. The night before the wedding there will probably be a dance, which will last all night. Weddings are the chief festivals and merry-makings in the life of the Russian peasant. Another cause of merry-making is the departure of the recruits. In the autumn a military deputation arrives at a village, and the recruits are chosen by lot. About thirty per cent of the male population is taken. Only sons are excused, the sole worker in a family, schoolmasters, and priests, and there are other exceptions.[1] The men who are chosen spend the time which elapses between their enlistment and their departure in merry-making. They get drunk nearly every day. They walk about the villages

[1] The total peace strength of the Russian army is 1,500,000, and the war strength about 4,000,000. This includes garrison troops and reserves.

playing accordions. They are generally glad to go, and their parents are nearly always glad to get rid of them.

The departure of the troops has given rise to a whole class of folk-songs. Many examples of these "recruiting songs" will be found in Balakirev's collection. They are poignantly sad in accent, and are sung in a melancholy fashion which in no way corresponds either to the feelings of the recruits or to those of their parents and relations.

The centre of life and business in a large village is the Bazaar. One day of the week, Wednesday or Saturday, is Bazaar day, and peasants flock to it from all the neighbourhood round to buy boots, caps, clothes, livestock, utensils, *samovars*, ikons, china, fruit, and anything they may need.

Another striking feature of village life is the frequency of fires. As the houses are made of wood, and thatched for the greater part with straw, and since the yards behind them and the street in front of them are littered with straw, it is a wonder a Russian village does not catch fire every day. It has been reckoned that the whole of the rural inhabited cottages of Russia are destroyed by fire once every seven years. On the other hand, the fires but seldom happen by accident; they are more often the result of what is called *podzhog*, which means arson. A man who has a spite against some one else sets his enemy's house alight. If there is a wind the fire spreads; so he will be generally careful not to do it if there is a wind, because if he is discovered, and the fire should set stacks of straw or hay or corn on fire, he will be beaten to death to a certainty. But far more frequent than these *podzhogi* are the fires that arise from men setting light to their houses in order to get the insurance.

When the fire is not of a dangerous kind, that is to say when there is no wind, the fire is a cause of "innocent merriment" to the rest of the population. I have already alluded to the energy and co-operation displayed by the peasants in putting out a fire. This is one of the things which must be seen to be realized. The energy is ferocious, the skill amazing, the co-operation absolute—for it must be remembered that the means of extinguishing a fire in Russia are generally of the scantiest.

Horses and driving and riding play a large part in Russian life. The Russian peasant is used from his earliest infancy to ride horses. His seat on horseback is perfect, and one of the prettiest

sights you can see in Russia is that of small children galloping their horses over the plain in the evening, when they take them to the river or to a camp in the fields. They ride like little centaurs.

In the winter, of course, the peasants' long creaking carts are exchanged for sledges. This is how Bruce describes the means of locomotion in the days of Peter the Great. It has not changed till this day :—

" The manner of travelling in Russia is extremely commodious, especially in winter, when their sledges glide away on the surface of the ice or snow in a flat country with incredible dispatch, and so very little labour to the horses that they can perform fifty or sixty miles a day. Their sledges are made of the bark of the linden tree, fitted to the size of a man, lined with some thick felt, and when a man is laid along in them, he is wrapped up and quite covered in good furs. . . . The sledges being built very low, should they happen to overturn there is little danger in the fall. In this mode of travelling, the time is mostly spent in sleeping, the easy, almost imperceptible motion favouring their repose. . . . Those who travel singly commonly go post, when they pay the whole expense of the journey at setting out, and have no more occasion to put their hand in their pocket till they come to the end of it, which is very convenient. The post-boy receives a written order, which he delivers to the next, who succeeds him, and so on to the end ; and they go day and night, having fresh horses every ten miles, so that the traveller may sleep all the way in his sledge, if he chooses. They commonly travel an hundred and fifty miles in twenty-four hours. I have often travelled three stages without waking. In summer they travel either by water, on the rivers with which this country abounds, or by land on horseback, by coach or sleeping-wagon, the roads in Russia being very broad, beautiful, and easy for travelling. For passing rivers they have a kind of floating bridge, made of large fir trees, fastened together, which can support a great weight. But the violent heat of the summer, and the prodigious quantities of muskitoes and flies, are very troublesome, and greatly interrupt the pleasures a stranger would otherwise have in passing through this country from the beauty and the variety of its forests, rivers, and lakes."

I once asked an Englishman who had just returned from Russia what had struck him most in the customs of the in-

habitants. He answered me thus: "One is never told the most striking fact about Russia. It is that the cabmen wear dressing-gowns." This is true: they wear a kind of dressing-gown made of blue stuff, which is the official hallmark of their trade. They are obliged to wear it. But if I were asked a similar question, and had to say what in the outward customs of the country especially differentiated the Russians from other people, I should without hesitation say the entrance into everyday life of their religious observances; the presence of an ikon in every room; the way the cabmen take off their hats as they pass churches, and cross themselves; the number of churches and private chapels and shrines where the people burn tapers; the altars covered with tapers at the railway stations; the services taking place there, on feasts, in the midst of the bustle of travel; the quantity of special services held to inaugurate any kind of undertaking; the yearly opening of a starch factory, for instance; the inauguration of a new house, the smelting of a bell, the starting of a locomotive, besides such larger ceremonies as the blessing of the waters and the blessing of the apples. Everything is inaugurated with a service in Russia. I once saw a new water-supply, worked by electricity, opened in a provincial town. There was, first, a long service at the cathedral, and then a special Te Deum sung in the snow, in a tent, alongside of the actual engine, just before it was set going.

All this is often put down to superstition; but the idea is erroneous. The Russians, and especially the peasants, perform their religious observances in the most matter-of-fact way in the world. But this in no way signifies either hypocrisy or necessarily superstition—although they are superstitious (and sceptical) with regard to signs and omens. The peasants are as a whole an intensely religious people; but often the signs and observances of their religion, the frequency with which they cross themselves, the candles they burn, are not necessarily expressive of their religion. They look upon this as something which must be done properly—a part of the ordinary duty of man, like going to the *Bania* on Saturdays, putting on their Sunday clothes on Sunday, feasting during the carnival and fasting during Lent. They pay honour to their Lares and Penates much in the same way as the Greeks and Romans must have done to their household gods, because it is *the duty of the Russian citizen;* so the Russian

thinks that to cross himself at certain places, to fast on certain days, to burn a candle as a thankoffering for a successful bargain, to uncover his head before the holy image, are the things which he knows every real orthodox Russian does, and a man who does not do these things is simply something else.

The greatest feast in the Russian year is Easter, when, after the midnight Mass, the Russians break their fast and embrace each other, saying, "Christ is risen!" A man who does not keep Easter is, in the eyes of the Russian peasant, a Turk or a heathen. His religious faith and the observance of it are based on a common sense. He considers that he holds and that he observes the religion of "any sensible man" (a phrase that Dr. Johnson did not make), and there is an end of it.

With regard to superstitions and omens, the Russian peasants have many curious beliefs.

They believe in the *Domovoi*, the home-goblin whom Milton calls the "Lubber-fiend," and who does the housework and earns the "cream-bowl duly set," and who is especially supposed to haunt the *Bania;* in the *Russalka*, the land mermaid, or Naiad, who haunts rivers; and, generally, in ghosts. But besides this, they have certain peculiar superstitions: one is that it is very unlucky for you if any one crosses the road in front of you, if you are driving. With regard to this superstition a Russian friend of mine wrote me the following description of a conversation he had with some of his servants, of whom one was a forester, and two had been non-commissioned officers; two of them could read and write.

"One of them," he wrote, "had been complaining that some business of his had miscarried because an old woman crossed the road in front of him, as he started. The others wished to know whether she had crossed it from the left or from the right. All agreed in severely blaming the woman. They then told me, in answer to my question, that the malign influence could be exercised by any one (including myself) crossing a body's way.

"'Why, sir,' they said, 'have you never noticed, as you drive through the village, that a body will rather stop and pretend to pick up something than to cross the road in front of you?'

"So I apologized for having often marred their business by my inconsiderate perambulation. They cordially accepted my apologies, and one of them remarked, 'Of course, sir, you have

been taught so many things that you couldn't be expected to know that.' After this, the conversation drifted on to a discussion of the different degrees of harm which could be brought about by a hare, a cat, or a dog crossing one's path. The discussion was fully illustrated from recent experiences. The examples were generally like this: A and B set out to sell some cucumbers in the neighbouring villages. At the very start, a woman (in practice it is always a woman, although in theory it might just as well be a man) crosses the room in front of them. A says to B: 'I think we'd better turn back, for it's no use going on after such an omen! But greed generally triumphs over the prophetic soul, and they go on, with the result that, of a whole cart-load, they only sell half, and that on credit! As for the hare, it was observed by somebody that the animal would always get up, under one's very feet, as though it came from nowhere. One of them had been to the war and served in Poland; the other, a Muscovite, from his boyhood, has read an immense amount—Tolstoi, Dumas, Gogol, and all the 'Liberation Literature.'"

Other people have given me instances of quite well-educated men turning back from their business, should their path be crossed by a cat.

The prevalence of religious observance, the blending of it with everyday life, is what struck Bruce, more than anything else in Russian life, in the days of Peter the Great.

"It is generally computed," he writes of Moscow, "that there are in this city 1500 churches, chapels, and cloisters." And of the ikons he writes:—

"Respecting their images, they suffer none that are carved or graven either in their churches or their houses, but such only as are painted on wood, in oil colours, by those of their own religion. . . . The walls of their churches are everywhere full of them: over the porch of their churches, in the market-place, and over the gates of their cities. You are sure to meet with the picture of some saint or other; so that, go which way you will, you see numbers of people crossing themselves with a most profound inclination of the head, repeating the 'Gospodi Pomiluy,' or, God have mercy upon me. These images they consider so necessary that without them they could not perform their devotion; they are the chief ornament of their houses, and whoever enters first pays his respects to the saint, and then to those of the family. A Russian once coming to me with a

message, looked round the room for an image, and seeing none, asked me, 'Where is thy God?' I answered, 'In heaven'; upon which he immediately went away without delivering the message."

What struck Bruce so forcibly is as true now as it was then, and the Russian peasant, as long as he tills the ground, will never abandon his religion or the observance of it, in spite of the fact that the Russian educated middle class is the most atheistic in Europe. Because the religion of the peasant is the working hypothesis taught him by life; and by his observance of it, he follows what he conceives to be the dictates of common sense consecrated by immemorial custom.

DYNASTY OF RURIK

862–1598

Rurik, **NOVGOROD**
Igor = Olga, 882, **KIEV**
Sviatoslav
Vladimir = Anna of Byzantium,† 1015
Yaroslav the Wise,† 1054
Vsevolod, Elizabeth, Anna, Anastasia
Vladimir Monomakh,† 1125
George, **SUZDAL**
Vsevolod
Yaroslav
Alexander Nevski
Daniel, **MOSCOW**
Ivan I Kalita
Simeon the Proud (Ivan II)
Dimitri Donskoi

Dimitri Donskoi
Basil I
Basil II the Gloomy
Ivan III = Sophia Palaeologa,† 1505
Basil III
Ivan IV,† 1584, the Terrible
= Anastasia Romanov
Ivan, Feodor, Dimitri

CHAPTER VI

THE BEGINNINGS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

IT is impossible to trace the early history of the Slavs; and their transmigration from Asia to Europe is as old as that of the other branches of the Indo-Aryan race. But it is on record that Slav tribes occupied the Danube, and were driven thence to the north-east, to the Vistula and to the Dnieper, by the "Volkj,"[1] probably the Romans, as early as the reign of the Emperor Trajan.

The Slavs on the south-eastern shores of the Baltic were known to Tacitus, who classes them among Europeans, because they build houses, wear shields, and fight on foot; the opposite of the Sarmatians, who live in chariots and fight on horseback. A Latin historian of the sixth century, Jornandes (*De getarum origine*), describing Scythia, tells us that among the tribes occupying the northern slopes of the mountains as far as the Vistula and the Dniester, the most important was that of the Slavs. In the sixth century, before the Slavs reached the Dnieper, they occupied the Carpathian Mountains. During the whole of the sixth century they made raids on the Empire of the East, and they combined common warfare. Hence the combination for purposes of war, of the Scythian tribes in the Carpathian Mountains, and in the south-west of the Russian plain, is the first definite known fact in the history of the Russian people.

Henceforward, during the seventh century the eastern Slavs gradually spread into the plain; and this movement constitutes the second definitely known fact in the history of the Russian people. During the seventh and eighth centuries the Slavs gradually spread towards the east and the north-east. The Slavs

[1] *De moribus germanorum*, chap. XLVI. Soloviev identifies the "Venedi" with the Slavs, basing himself on Pliny and Tacitus.

RUSSIA 1054-1240
NOVGOROD
Ladoga
Ustyog
Belosersk
Vologda
Yurievo
Novgorod
Pskov
Riga
Torshok
Rostov
Susdal
Nizhni Novgorod
Vladimir
Moscow
Murom
Bulgar
Polotsk
Smolensk
POLOTSK
SMOLENSK
Vitepsk
Minsk
MUROM &
RYASAN
Tarusa
Ryasan
VOLHYNIA
Pinsk
Lublin
CHERNIGOV & SEVERSK
Chernigov
Novgorod Severski
Vladimir
Yaroslavl
GALICIA
Kiev
Kyanev
Galichye
Svenigorodo
Dnieper
Don
Volga
Ural
Sarev
Tama
B.V. Darbishire, Oxford, 1911

carried on trade with the east, and the success of their commercial dealings resulted in the foundation of the oldest towns and trade centres of Russia. The earliest Russian writers do not tell us when these towns were founded. At the time when the earliest records were written, towns such as Kiev, Smolensk, Novgorod, and Rostov seem to have been considerable settlements. But the extension of the trade of the Slavs towards the south and the east, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, probably took place in the eighth century.

These towns, in order to defend themselves against the inroads of the Pechenegi, a tribe who came from the east, fortified themselves. The first trace of local political organization in Russia dates from about the middle of the ninth century. It consists of the *Gorodskaia oblast*, or the city district; that is to say, a commercial district, governed by a fortified town which served as the commercial centre of the district. They were called after the names of the towns. The formation of these districts was accompanied by a second local form of political organization—the Principality of the *Variags*, or Varangers.

The Varangers came from Scandinavia at the beginning of the ninth century, at the same time that the Norsemen, called everywhere the "Danes," were overrunning Western Europe, towards the end of the reign of Charlemagne. They came to Russia from the Baltic Sea and advanced along the rivers and the waterways, for the purposes of trade, all through the tenth and eleventh centuries. (Their presence in Russia is recorded a good deal earlier than the tenth century.) But unlike the Danes in Western Europe, the Varangers came to Russia, not in the guise of pirates or coast robbers, but as armed merchants who were travelling through Russia bound for Byzantium in order to carry on trade there. When they arrived in Russian towns they found a class of the population similar to themselves, namely, a class of armed merchants; they co-operated with them, and helped the local merchants to guard the roads, and formed convoys for the Russian caravans. In such trade centres where the Varangers were numerous they soon left off being merely co-operative, and paid guardians of the caravans and roads, and became rulers.

Thus came about the *Varanger Principalities*. The companies of these armed merchants had leaders; the leaders were called

in Scandinavian Konings or Vikings. From the former word, *Koning*, the Russian word for prince, *Kniaz*, is derived. It was a simple and easy step for the Princes to pass from the subordinate position of a military commander, defending a city for others with armed men at his back, to the undisputed control of that city.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, there were several such principalities. In the second half of the ninth century, for instance, we find in the north, the principality of Rurik in Novgorod, of Askold in Kiev, and several others. In the middle of the ninth century, a band of Varangers appeared in the Gulf of Finland and Volkov, and levied tribute from the northern Finnish and Slav tribes. The local tribes drove out the invaders, and in order to defend themselves against further inroads, they hired a band of different Varangers, whom they called Russians. The hired defenders established themselves in the land they had been hired to defend, built themselves towns and called themselves conquerors.

In older Russian histories the story of the origin of the Russian kingdom is related as follows :—

In 862 three brothers, Rurik, Sineus, and Truvor, arrived in Russia. Rurik settled in Novgorod, Sineus on the White Lake in the district of the Finnish Vesi, and Truvor in Izborsk. Nestor, the ancient scribe, writes that the Slavs of Novgorod had sent an embassy beyond the sea to the Varangers, with the following message: "Our land is great and fruitful, but there is no order in it. Come and rule and govern us." Shortly afterwards Rurik's two brothers died, and Rurik annexed their dominions.

At the same time that Rurik assumed undisputed sovereignty, two of his countrymen, Askold and Dir, started on a commercial expedition to Constantinople. On the way they stopped at Kiev, took possession of it, and established their rule there; they then reached Constantinople, and after having made an unsuccessful attempt to take it, returned to Kiev.

This is how most histories tell the story, and the advent of Rurik is generally regarded as the beginning of Russian history and the earliest origin of the Russian Empire. But the more modern historians say that it is in Kiev, rather than in Novgorod, that we must seek the true beginning of Russia, and for these

reasons: at that time Kiev was, owing to its geographical position, the centre of Russian trade. Ships sailed up to Kiev along the Volkov, the Western Dwina, and the Dnieper and its tributaries; the possession of Kiev, therefore, became a cause of conflict and rivalry among the various Varanger Princes. The possession of Kiev meant the possession of the key to Russian trade. Kiev originally started by being one of the local Varanger principalities, governed originally by Askold and his brother, who settled there mainly to ward off danger from without. They were succeeded by Oleg, who did the same thing. But the very position of Kiev, which was strategic, military as well as commercial, gave it a larger importance. The trade interests of Kiev were necessarily those of the whole of the adjoining country.

The principalities which adjoined Kiev were in constant danger and fear of invasion from Eastern tribes. They were obliged, therefore, in self-defence to co-operate and to combine. The natural centre of this co-operation and combination was Kiev. Hence it was in Kiev, and not in Novgorod, under Rurik, that the first seed of the Russian State took root.

In about the middle or latter half of the ninth century, the principalities and the towns adjacent to Kiev were obliged to combine, in order to defend their frontiers and their trade; and by combining, they were led naturally, and by the force of circumstances, to depend economically and politically on Kiev, which was the commercial and military centre of the whole district, and by their depending on and submitting to the Prince of Kiev, the Varanger principality of Kiev became the kernel of the Russian State.

The history of the first rulers of Kiev is a blend of half-historical tradition and saga, in which certain broad facts stand out clearly.

Oleg occupied Kiev in 882. By the beginning of the eleventh century all the tribes of the eastern Slavs had submitted to Kiev. And in the middle of the eleventh century the boundaries of the principality of Kiev extended from the lake of Ladoga to the mouth of the River Ros, the right tributary of the Dnieper, and to two of its left tributaries, and east and west from the mouth of the River Kliazma to the region of the Western Bug. Galicia in the tenth and eleventh centuries was a bone of contention; it belonged at one time to Russia and at another to Poland.

The various occupants of this territory belonged to the principality of Kiev or to the kingdom of Russia. But the kingdom of Russia was not yet the kingdom of the Russian people, for the Russian people did not yet exist. Only the elements were here from which it was slowly and painfully to develop. Christianity was spreading slowly. The principality was governed by a *Velikii Kniaz* (Chief Prince or Grand Duke), who was descended from the Varanger Vikings, the leaders of the armed merchants who appeared in Russia in the ninth century; he was originally the paid and armed guardian or caretaker of the Russian tradeways and markets. In the course of time his powers extended and he became a ruler.

The higher class of this society—the Princes' instrument of government and national defence— was the Prince's *druzhina*, or company of men-at-arms. The men-at-arms carried on trade with the merchants of the big towns, and in so doing received from them the name of "Rusi," or "Russians."

The historical as well as the etymological origins of the word are equally obscure. The oldest Russian historians suppose that it was a racial or clannish appellation, and belonged to the Varanger class from which the first Princes issued. Later the word has a class significance. In the tenth century the word "Rus," or "Russian," designated the upper class of the Russian society, consisting chiefly of members of the Varanger militia. Later the word "Rus," or "Russian earth"—the expression occurs first in a treaty made by the ambassador of Prince Igor with the Greeks, in 945, in Byzantium—signified the district of Kiev. And in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (when the Rus amalgamated with the indigenous Slavs) the words "Rus" and "Russian" not only had this geographical significance, but also designated the whole of the territory that was under the rule of the Russian Princes, including all the Christian Slavo-Russian population. In the tenth century there was a sharp difference between the mercantile and military upper class, who called themselves *Rusi*, and the indigenous people, who were Slavs and paid tribute to the Rusi. Soon after this the lower class is designated on the old records not as an indigenous race paying tribute to foreign settlers, but as a lower class of one Russian society, differentiated, by especial privileges and duties, from the upper layers of the same Russian society.

The foreign element gradually formed itself into classes which in their turn were fused into one state. But the difference between the foreign invasion in Russia and that which took place in the other countries of Western Europe—the Norman invasion of England, for instance—is that the foreign dominating race in Russia, before it was transfused into classes, was leavened in a great degree by the native element.

Until the death of Yaroslav, in the middle of the eleventh century, in 1054, the Princes succeeded one another according to no definite and regular system, but the sovereignty was confined to one person. At the death of Yaroslav the concentration of the power in one person ceased, the reason being that the family of Yaroslav increased and multiplied with every generation, and the kingdom was divided among the descendants of the Princes. The division, however, was a complicated one: it in no way resembled the feudal system of the West.

The supreme power was collective and belonged to the whole of the Grand Duke's family. Each prince had the right to rule temporarily and in his turn over a certain part of the dominions, in order of seniority. The principle at the root of this system was that of the indivisibility of the rule of the Princes over the Russian land.

The Grand Duke lived at Kiev, and had only a nominal supremacy over the other members of his family. Every time a member of the family died, all the other Princes moved up a place from one *volost* or appanage to the other, from the youngest to the eldest. The grand ducal throne passed not to the eldest son, but to the eldest member of the whole family, generally to the late Grand Duke's brother, and only after all the brothers had ruled, to the eldest son. The land was not divided among the family in permanent inalienable lots, but distributed, and redistributed at the death of each member of the family, in the same order in which the original distribution had been made. This system of appanages was in force until the end of the twelfth century. During the first generations of the Yaroslavs it worked quite simply; but as the families increased and multiplied, and the relationships became more complicated, disputes naturally arose with regard to questions of seniority. It became difficult to determine and define the degrees of seniority. As the family spread in several parallel branches, it became difficult to settle

which was the eldest and by how much. This resulted in a quantity of civil wars which were caused by disputes between the various elder uncles and young grandchildren. There was a perpetual conflict between seniority of age, on the one hand, and lineage and pedigree on the other, which produced a situation similar to that out of which the War of the Roses broke out in England. The Princes were unable to work out a method of settling these questions peacefully, and accordingly they settled them by force of arms.

Before proceeding any further, it is interesting to note that this system of distribution and redistribution is the same as governs that of the communal ownership of land among the peasants—the *Mir*. Every member of the *Mir* possesses only the temporary use of his piece of land; the land belongs to the community.

The system of distribution followed by the Princes of Kiev, and the quarrels it occasioned, had two important results. In the first place, in proportion as the families multiplied, the distant branches tended to become more and more alien one to the other, and the splitting up of the dynasties was accomplished by a splitting up of the land. That is to say, it destroyed the political and dynastic unity of the Russian land. In the second place the very loss of this political unity—caused by the internecine strife of the Princes—instilled into Russian society and developed the feeling of the unity of the Russian land. It led them to think of the Russian land as something whole, of some common and binding tie which affected every one and everybody. So the Russia of the Kiev supremacy may be said to be the cradle of the Russian nationality.

Christianity filtered gradually into Russia by way of the River Dnieper. In 957 Princess Olga, the mother of the ruling Prince Sviastoslav, Rurik's grandson, went to Byzantium to be baptized. Her son Sviatoslav had not followed her example, but had remained a pagan. But her grandson married the Emperor of Byzantium's sister, and at his marriage was baptized. After this the whole population of Kiev was baptized in 987, and Christianity began to spread, but it was the Christianity of the Eastern Church. A bond was thereby established between Russia and Byzantium, and Russia was excluded from the great intellectual community of which Rome was the centre.

The bond with Byzantium exercised a considerable influence over the manners and customs of the Russian people at this period. From Byzantium came not only wealth but art. With the introduction of Christianity, came books, laws, pictures, vocal music. Records of the eleventh and twelfth centuries speak of the familiarity of the Russian Princes of that time with foreign tongues, of the institution by them of schools where Latin and Greek were taught, of the favour they showed to scholars coming from Greece, or from Western Europe. The Russian MSS. of the twelfth century are in no way inferior to the best MSS. of Western Europe, of the same period. The city of Kiev was decorated by Greek architects and artists, and the mosaics in the cathedral of St. Sofia still testify to the ancient wealth of the city.

In the middle of the twelfth century, the first beginnings of a change came about which was to give an altogether new and different turn to Russian history, and to make Russia from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century totally different from the Russia of the twelfth century. The mass of the population, instead of, as hitherto, being concentrated in the region of the Volga, appears in the Upper Volga. Up to the thirteenth century the main factor in the political and economic life of the country was the large commercial city; after the thirteenth century the chief factor is the hereditary ruler of his province. A new scene of action appears, and with it a new political force: the Russia of the Upper Volga, and the Duke, to which the City, his former rival, gives way.

The cause of this change was the fall and decay of the social order which was instituted and maintained by the Princes of Kiev. There were economical as well as political reasons for the decay.

The wealth of the cities of the Prince of Kiev, which were outwardly so prosperous, had a darker side in the corresponding poverty of the country. The economic wealth of Kiev of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was based upon slavery. The Russian merchants trafficked in slaves on the Volga, in the towns of Bulgaria, and in Constantinople. The first code of Russian law, the *Russkaia Pravda* (the foundation of which was drawn up by Yaroslav in 1016, but whose codification continued into the first half of the twelfth century), devotes a large number

of its articles to the slave-trade. From the *Russkaia Pravda* we gather that there were at this time three social classes: the upper class, who surrounded the Prince; the *druzhina*, or militia, who were of Varanger extraction; then ordinary freemen, who formed two classes: (*a*) the traders, and (*b*) the rural population, consisting mostly of hereditary farmers on the Prince's land, which reverted to the Prince in the absence of a male heir; and fourthly—or thirdly, if we consider all the freemen as one class—the slaves, who had neither property nor rights. These slaves have nothing to do with the serfs, who were bound to the soil at the end of the sixteenth century and liberated by Alexander II in 1861. They came into existence thus: when the princes went on a campaign they did not aim at an extension of frontier, or an aggrandizement of their country; but they wished to increase the population of their thinly peopled land, and they set about to do so artificially, by making the prisoners, whom they took in war, into serfs. They not only reduced to slavery prisoners taken from an alien foe, but their own countrymen; insolvent debtors, for instance; this was not conducive to economic prosperity.

"Capital," says Kluchevski, "is the most privileged person in the 'Russian Law' of Yaroslav." Murder is punished by a fine in money (the *vira* or *wehrgeld*); the degree of guilt is determined by the pecuniary or material loss. Capital punishment does not exist. There is little difference between civil and criminal law; but in some few cases a double fine exists, one part being the compensation for damage received by the claimant, and the other part going to the Prince. The murder of a serf and theft of a beaver are punished by the same fine. A woman is taxed half as much as a man, but a woman's finger and nose are taxed as much as a man's. The soul of the legislation is property; the rules for money transactions, hereditary rights, are clearly defined. The theft of a horse (to this day the greatest crime among the Russian peasantry) is punished by the loss of all rights, property, and liberty. Seven witnesses are required to establish the guilt of a foreigner or a Varanger, two only to establish that of a native.

The nature of the legislation was commercial and matter-of-fact; but, as I have already said, it did not make for economic prosperity. Indeed, both politically and economically, the system

of distribution of " appanages," as it is generally called, and the internecine strife by which it was accompanied, were bound to prove fatal to the prosperity of the country.

Apart from this, there was another factor which helped to undermine the Russia of Kiev. This was the uninterrupted series of inroads of Asiatic tribes who came from the Steppes during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Russians were continually fighting a tribe called the Polotsi, and they exhausted themselves in this continuous effort. While Western Europe was fighting the East in the Crusades, the Russians, in the Steppes, were covering the left flank of the European advance. The result of these political and economic disadvantages was that the Russia of Kiev below the Dnieper began to diminish in population. The stream of the population flowed from the Lower Dnieper in two different directions: one current flowed to the west, to the Upper Dniester and the Vista, to Galicia and Poland; the second current flowed to the north-east, to the region between the River Oka and the Upper Volga.

And thus Russia began the work which proved to be the most important factor of its destiny among nations, namely, the colonization of the immense districts of land which we call " Great Russia " to-day. The Russians of the Dnieper district, by emigrating to the north-east and blending with the Finnish tribes which they found there, and which they assimilated, founded the Great Russian race.

In 1169 a Prince Andrew, who was descended from one of the Kiev Princes, ruled over the town of Vladimir, on the Kliazma, some miles east of Moscow. His father, Prince Yuri Dolgoruki, succeeded to the throne of Kiev in 1154, and reigned there until 1157. At the death of Prince Yuri several princes succeeded him in turn, and finally the city fell to the lot of a distant nephew of Prince Andrew.

Prince Andrew, claiming seniority, took Kiev by the sword and sacked it and put the inhabitants to the sword in 1169; but he did not remain there. Leaving Kiev in the hands of a junior prince, he returned to the north. The sacking of Kiev by one of its own sons marks the complete break between the settlers of the north and the south from which these same settlers had migrated; and it shows that Kiev had fallen from its proud position. Prince Andrew, reigning in the Suzdalian

district of the north, assumed the title of Grand Duke, which had hitherto only been borne by the Princes of Kiev. Up till this time the Prince, who was recognized as being senior among his relations, lived in Kiev; and the Prince who lived in Kiev was regarded as the Grand Duke. Prince Andrew changed this order of things; he insisted on being recognized as the Grand Duke of the whole of the Russian country, but at the same time he did not abandon his Suzdalian domain, nor did he sit on the throne of his father at Kiev.

Hitherto when a prince was first in seniority, and ascended the grand ducal throne of Kiev, he left his former district to the relation who was next in order of seniority, thus Andrew, by remaining in Suzdalia, divested his appanage of its patriarchal and communal rank and significance, and made it into an independent dukedom, the inalienable property of one Prince; consequently it was divorced from the remaining Russian appanages, which were governed in order of seniority.

This was the first attempt at a change in the political order of the Russian country. Moreover, in his own northern district, Prince Andrew changed the order of succession; instead of recognizing his nearest of kin as his successors in order of seniority, he drove his youngest brothers and his nephews from the kingdom.

This, again, was an attempt at substituting for the communal and patriarchal system, an hereditary patrimonial system, which was destined later to develop into the Russian autocracy. After the death of Prince Andrew, the territory of Suzdalia gradually increased in importance. The ancient towns and the ruling classes of local society gradually lost their power and importance. In the reign of Vsevolod (1176–1212) Suzdalia had assumed a definite preponderance over the rest of Russia, and its ruler makes the first attempt, disregarding all seniority, to annex a foreign territory by conquest. Kiev is disregarded; the ties which bound the north-eastern Russians to their old centre are broken. All this is the result of the emigration of the Russians to Suzdalia; and we have in these facts the seeds and elements of what is going to be the Russian aristocracy.

But before looking on any further, let us look back for a moment at the patriarchal Russia of Kiev—the Russia

which existed until the thirteenth century. The political power was represented by two elements—the Prince and the people's assembly, which was called the *Veche*. The *Veche* had no regular organization; people were called together by the ringing of the church bell; they assembled in the public place and decided on questions of war and peace. If the Prince was strong, the Veche was weak; if the Prince was weak on the other hand, the Veche often expelled him. In some towns, in Novgorod and Pskov, for instance, the Veche grew to be an independent political power, and made their towns into "free towns": in reality into two small republics, and they remained thus until their liberty was taken away by Ivan the Terrible.

The Veche lost its significance under the Tartar yoke, and gradually died away when the small dukedoms were absorbed by Moscow.

The whole of this period is the adventurous romantic epoch of Russian history, fertile in epic and song, in warlike deeds, and love of glory and fighting. It has left to literature an epic masterpiece, *The Word about Igor's Fights*,[1] which is the story of an unsuccessful expedition of Prince Igor's in 1185 against the Polotsi, a nomadic Eastern tribe. It tells of his march, his defeat, the lament of his wife, who awaits him on the city walls, his flight and his return. The author is unknown, but contemporary with the events described, and no one has yet started the theory that the poem was written by a committee of savants several centuries later. It is a wonderful poem, full of imagination, observation of nature, Homeric simplicity and pathos, and impetuous power.

The Russia of the eleventh and twelfth centuries formed a part of the political system of Europe. The Grand Dukes of Kiev were allied by ties of marriage with the kings of the West and the Emperors of the East.

In 911 a treaty was drawn up between Prince Oleg, the uncle of Igor, Rurik's son, and the Emperor Alexander of Byzantium. Vladimir, as has been already said, married a Greek princess, Anna, and through her sister Theophana became the brother-in-law of Otto II.

[1] German translation, Dr. Boltz. Berlin, 1854. French translation, Rambaud, *La Russie. Épique.* Paris, 1876.

Yaroslav's eldest daughter married Harald, King of Norway; his second daughter became Queen of France by marrying Henry I; Anastasia, the youngest, married Andrew I of Hungary; Vladimir Monomakh's mother was the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Monomachus, and Vladimir himself married the daughter of Harold, King of England. The schism of the Eastern and Western churches was still indeterminate. The commerce with Byzantium brought Russia into touch with the art and science of antiquity.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Russia excelled among the nations of Europe in trade, and was not behindhand in culture. Russia was at this time in no way isolated; in fact, less isolated than it was again to be until the sixteenth century.

But this promising beginning was destined to be interrupted by a great cataclysm—the invasion of the Mongols. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, just when the Middle Ages in Europe were about to blossom in poetry and scholarship, Russia was to receive a blow which was fated to mean a setback of three hundred years.

CHAPTER VII

THE TARTAR INVASION

At the same time that the Russians of the European Ukraine were engaged in an unremitting warfare with the tribes of the Steppes, the Polotsi, a new factor in the situation arose in the far eastern Steppes of Asia. This was the trek of the Tartars. The Tartars, who invaded Russia at the beginning of the thirteenth century, were Mongols, who came from the region of Chinese Tartary, south of Siberia, the Mongols being kindred in race to the Turks. They were subject to a Tartar race who ruled in the north of China; they were nomads; their manners and customs were the same as those of the Huns, the Scythians and Polotsi. In the first quarter of the thirteenth century a rising took place amongst the Mongols, and one of their Khans, Temuchin, developed an ambition to be a kind of superman; he established his independence, and reduced all the other Tartar and Mongol chiefs to subjection. Shortly after this, at a time when the Mongol warriors were gathered in hordes at the source of the River Amur, a prophet appeared and declared that Heaven had granted to Temuchin the empery of the whole world, and that henceforward Temuchin should be called Gengis-Khan, or the Great Khan. The news was received by the Mongols with joy, and the tribes of Asia, the Kirghiz, Southern Siberia, proclaimed their allegiance to him.

Gengis-Khan then refused to pay tribute to the King of the Tartar tribe, whose vassal he had hitherto been; he invaded China, and in 1215 took Pekin. Then, leaving a certain number of his warriors in China, he turned homewards.

The Russians crossed the Dnieper (in 1224) and met the Mongol hordes at the River Kalka—now Letza, in the Government of Ekaterinoslav. They fought bravely against the Mongols,

but were defeated. After this battle, the Mongols turned their steps eastward, and disappeared as quickly as they had come. For six years nothing more was heard of them, and Gengis-Khan, after having made further conquests in the East, returned home and died in 1227.

His eldest son and successor, Oktai, put his nephew Batii at the head of 300,000 warriors, and bade him conquer the northern coast of the Caspian Sea and the countries beyond it. In 1237 Batii invaded Russia; he took the town of Riazan, burnt Moscow, and in 1238 took Vladimir.

In 1240 he took Kiev and destroyed it, and put the inhabitants to the sword. The only town which escaped destruction at the hands of the Mongols was Novgorod. Batii, having made victorious raids in Poland, Hungary, Kroatia, Servia, Bulgaria, Moldavia, and Wallachia, returned to the banks of the Volga. He proclaimed himself khan and declared his suzerainty over Russia, the Taurus peninsula, the Caspian districts, and all the territory from the mouth of the Don to the Danube. Batii and the Mongols seemed satisfied with being masters of the Steppes of the south; they did not attempt to establish themselves in the wooded regions of the north. Nor did they leave the Steppes, where their settlement was called "the Golden Horde," or abandon the nomad life, which suited them, to settle in the towns. Had they done in Russia what they did in India and Turkey, they might have been there until this day. Fortunately the climate of Russia damped any ambition of this kind. The Khans wished only to be suzerains at a distance; they demanded tribute and homage from the Russian provinces; the civil affairs of the kingdom were of no interest to them, and they wished in no way to interfere with them. The Russians therefore became the vassals of the Mongols. They were obliged to go to Asia to receive their investment from the heirs of Batii. They had also to support the presence in Russia of a kind of resident Mongol called *Bashak*, whose duty it was to levy taxes.

The Bashaks represented the Khans in Russia, and did what they pleased. They treated the Russians with contempt, as did all Mongols, even the merchants and the tramps. The inevitable result was a moral degeneration amongst the Russian people. They forgot their pride or turned it into cunning, and in

learning to deceive the Tartars they learnt to deceive one another. They exchanged the virtues of the strong for the expedients of the weak. And in growing accustomed to bribe the barbarians, they became greedy of gold and insensible to affront and shame. Their honour suffered. The only weapons of the Russian Princes were gifts, brides, and intrigue, and these they used freely. They intrigued one against the other, each one accusing the other to the Tartar Princes in order to increase his own power.

This period is the low-water mark of Russian history. All sense of tradition, racial pride, and public obligation disappeared; the instincts of self-preservation and self-aggrandizement ran riot. In this desolate epoch the only redeeming figure is that of Saint Alexander Nevski, Prince of Novgorod, who defeated the Swedes and the Germans of the Baltic. But even Alexander was obliged not only to acknowledge Batii, but to make a journey in person to Tartary to pay homage to the Great Khan.

The supremacy of the Tartars had at least the advantage of imposing a kind of check on the perpetual internecine strife of the Russian Princes, who, had they been left entirely to themselves, would have split up Russia into small local districts perpetually at war one with the other. The supremacy of the Khan gave a semblance of unity to the small local principalities of the Russian Princes, which were always quarrelling among themselves.

Another result of the Tartar yoke was the strengthening of the national religion. Religion took the place of patriotism, or rather patriotism took the shape of religion, and became inseparable from it. The peculiar quality which stamps the religion of the Russian people to this day was the result of the Tartar yoke. To this day in Russia orthodoxy is the hallmark and indispensable adjunct of patriotism.

The Russian religion is essentially national. To be a Russian, in the popular, peasant opinion, you must be orthodox. Russia is, in the eyes of the Russian, the throne and centre of orthodoxy. "Orthodox" is the grandest epithet the Russian applies to his country and his rulers. A Russian never says he is a member of the Greek or of the Eastern Church, but of the Orthodox Church. The Russian peasant generally considers not only that orthodox and Christian are one and the same thing, but

that between orthodoxy and heathenism there is no alternative; and if you are not orthodox but a heretic, you are equivalent to a Moslem or a Tartar. Russian soldiers and peasants have sometimes said to me: "Your people in England are white, just as we are—and, I suppose, orthodox."

The Tartar invasion of Russia is not an isolated event in the history of Europe. Russia, as I have already said in the preceding chapter, was defending the left flank of the attack of the Crusades on the east. The Crusaders were in reality attacking the centre of the gigantic circle of Oriental advance of the East, which was enveloping Russia on the extreme left, and Spain on the extreme right. Russia underwent the Tartar yoke for two centuries, and Spain submitted to the Moorish domination.

The Tartar invasion of Russia had the effect of retarding the material and political progress of the country; it may also be said to have had a certain moral effect on the character of the people, by lowering their national pride, and accustoming them to subjection; but apart from these two things, it cannot be said to have had any permanent influence. The Tartars during the whole of their occupation neither tried to assimilate the Russians, nor were their manners and customs assimilated by the Russians. The spirit, the ideals, the moral code and the manner of life of the Asiatics did not even reach the Russian people.

The Tartars carried their policy of non-interference in Russian affairs not only to the point of tolerating the religion of their vassals, but of protecting their priests. The churches were exempt from taxes, and the authority of the clergy received the same sanction as the authority of the Princes.

But the Tartar yoke was certainly the partial cause at least of one far-reaching and important political development. The power of the towns and of the Boyars, the aristocratic class, disappeared, and the power of the Princes increased. The number of the Princes diminished, and in proportion as they dwindled in number, the power of each Prince was widened and intensified. The power gradually came to be concentrated in one man. The Tartars maintained the authority of the Princes against the Boyars who disputed it, enabling the Princes to crush the power of the Boyars.

The Tartars maintained the authority of the more powerful princes against that of the weaker princes, enabling the more

powerful princes to shatter the weaker vessels. In fact, the Tartars helped to save the unity of the Russian nation, for had there been no Tartar invasion, Russia would probably have perished from exhaustion, internal conflict, and internecine strife.

There were, no doubt, other causes in the rise of the Russian autocracy. They will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RISE OF MOSCOW

IN the last chapter but one, I mentioned some of the political results of the migration of the Russians from the Dnieper and the colonization of Suzdalia. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the new order of things gradually took shape in that region, Russia, as a united kingdom, no longer existed. The Tartars on the one side, and the Lithuanians on the other, had destroyed Russian unity. Kiev, when it rearose after its destruction by the Tartars, was an isolated and foreign city.

There was no trace left in the region of the Upper Volga of the old order of things which had existed in the days of the Kiev Princes. There was, therefore, nothing to impede the growth of any new political system. The town of Vladimir, on the Kliazma, took the place of Kiev as the political centre of the Russia of the Upper Volga, and the seat of the eldest representatives of the Princes of Kiev—but only for a short time.

Alongside of Vladimir a number of small *volosts*, or appanages, grew up in Suzdalia, and these small appanages were not governed according to seniority, but a new order of things came into existence, namely, an hereditary order: the appanages, instead of falling to the next in seniority, passed from father to son in a direct line. Thus each little kingdom became the permanent, separate, and personal property of each individual Prince, and it passed from father to son, according to the will of the owner. This change in the order of inheritance of the Princes was accompanied by a change in the name of the appanages which they occupied. The districts of Suzdalia, instead of being called *volosts*, or appanages, as hitherto, were called *udicli*, which means separate allotments or holdings, in the sense of a

separate permanent possession which can be handed down hereditarily.

The whole history of political evolution of Suzdalian Russia up to the middle of the fifteenth century is based on this new order of *udicli*. Thus there were now Princes of Riazan, Princes of Vladimir, and others. The cause of the change was partly geographical and partly political. It was geographical, because of the nature of the country, which was a network of small rivers and streams flowing in different directions. The population was split up by the nature of the country, which was unfavourable to the establishment of a political or economic centre, and contained in its various river-basins small ready-made kingdoms, partitioned off one from the other. It was political, because the Prince, who was the first to colonize the district, looked upon it as his own property.

Another cause of change was the absence of any obstacle to the growth of a new order. The result of this new order of hereditary holdings was that Northern Russia split up politically into smaller and smaller portions, and lost altogether its already feeble links of unity. The Princes consequently grew poorer and poorer, and gradually withdrew into their appanages; they tended more and more to seek their own private interests rather than those of the community, and they thereby lost the sense of nationality. All this prepared the ground for the rise of political unity. If a powerful prince should arise, ambitious of expansion and concentration, he would meet with no remonstrance either on the part of his impoverished neighbour princes or amongst the local population, which was entirely indifferent to the doings of its impoverished rulers.

The consequences, in fact, of the new order made everything easy for its subsequent destruction. This new order put an end, for the time being, to Russian unity, but by its very nature it was incapable of defending itself against any subsequent new order; it laid itself open to destruction, and left ruins out of which the fabric of Russian autocracy could easily be built. It is therefore in Russian history the period of transition through which Russia passed from national unity, which it had enjoyed under the Kiev Princes, to political unity.

The transition was brought about by Moscow.

The first mention of Moscow in ancient Russian history is in

1147. Prince Dolgoruki summons the Prince of Novgorod thither to meet him. During the greater part of the thirteenth century there does not appear to have been a regular line of Princes ruling in Moscow. In the winter of 1237–8 Moscow was taken by the Tartars. In 1263, at the death of Alexander Nevski, his youngest son, Daniel, appears in Moscow; henceforward Moscow is a capital with a permanent princely house. Daniel is the father of Moscow. The sudden rise of Moscow into prominence and predominance, which was a riddle to the ancient Russian writers, can be accounted for by its geographical position and its economic situation.

Moscow was a point of connection between the waterways and the roads. The River Moskva connected by a small tributary the Upper Volga with the middle Oka ; it was also connected by a tributary with Kliazma. Again, at the end of the fourteenth century, one of the great roads went from Moscow to Vladimir, and the road from Kiev to Rostov passed through Moscow. Thus Moscow arose at the crossing of three great roads, and this was obviously an economic advantage. The advantages of the situation were further increased owing to the district being populated comparatively early, and owing to the comparative density of the population. Thus, owing to the geographical situation of Moscow, people from every quarter, who were threatened by a foreign foe, flocked to the city.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Moscow was the ethnographical centre of Russia. Its central position protected it on all sides from foreign foes, whose attacks fell more heavily on the neighbouring principalities of Riazan, Novgorod, Rostov, Yaroslav, and Smolensk, and seldom reached Moscow.

Another reason of the swift development of Moscow, as a principality, was the rank of its Prince according to lineage, for since he was a member of one of the youngest branches of his race, he could never hope to attain seniority and therewith the rank of Grand Duke, and so he was led to make a position for himself. The Princes of Moscow, feeling that they were without the prestige of lineage and tradition, were led to create a policy and line of action of their own, while the economic advantages of their city gave them the means wherewith to do it.

The Moscow Princes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries made the most of their advantages, and achieved important

results politically. In the first place, they gradually extended the limits of their territory. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the principality of Moscow was about the most insignificant *udiel* in the north. It was considerably smaller than the Government of Moscow is now.

But the Princes of Moscow, partly by purchase, partly by force of arms, and partly by diplomatic negotiations, with the aid of the Tartars, extended the boundaries of their territory, so that in the middle of the fifteenth century the principality of Moscow had an area of almost 15,000 square miles, and exceeded in size (1462) the principalities of all the other Russian Princes. But the Moscow Princes aimed not only at territorial, but also at lineal supremacy. They aimed at obtaining the Grand Dukedom, which they had no claim to, since they were a minor branch among the families. Their chief rivals were the Princes of Tver, who excelled the Moscow Princes both in lineage and in personal exploits, and who also had legal right on their side.

The Princes of Moscow had on their side material wealth and a grasp of the situation, which the Prince of Tver misunderstood to a point that he considered it possible at that time to throw off the Tartar yoke. He summoned the Russian Princes to league together and accomplish this, and in 1327 he massacred the Tartar agents in Tver.

The Moscow Princes took quite another line. They saw that it was much more advantageous to fight the Tartars with money and by cunning than on the field. And Prince Ivan Kalita, who was third in descent from Alexander Nevski, was charged by the Khan to punish the Prince of Tver for his revolt.

Ivan Kalita executed the commission, and under his command the Tartars ravaged the principality of Tver. In reward for this, Ivan Kalita, in 1328, received the throne of the chief Prince of Russia, which from that time onward never left the Moscow Princes. This shows us how the presence of the Tartars helped to establish the Russian autocracy. As soon as Ivan Kalita had obtained the supremacy, he made a wise use of it, and made the whole of North-eastern Russia feel the advantages of his rule. During the forty years from 1323 to 1363 Russia was free from Tartar raids. Moreover, Ivan set

about to bind together the various Russian Princes by making a league.

In 1353, Ivan, the second son of Ivan Kalita, together with the title of Grand Duke, received from the Khan jurisdiction over all the Russian Princes. During his reign the alliance of Russian Princes, with Moscow at the head of it, grew larger and stronger and assumed a national significance.

In 1380, almost the whole of Northern Russia, under the command of the Prince of Moscow, Dimitri Ivanovitch, fought the Tartars on the banks of the Don, in the plain of Kulikovo, and won their first victory over them. Owing to this victory, the Prince of Moscow became the national leader of Northern Russia against the foreign foe. And here, again, the Tartars were the blind agent in the formation of a new force—the Russian autocracy, which was destined to destroy them.

Under the Moscow Princes, Moscow not only became the political, but also the religious capital of Russia. The seat of the Metropolitan was transferred to Moscow even before the Princes had made that city the political centre. This had the effect of greatly increasing the prestige of the Moscow Princes, whose action was thereby considered to be under the immediate sanction of the Head of the Church. So that in the fourteenth century, the people of Russia came to regard the Prince of Moscow firstly as a clever landowner, who knew how to administrate and to establish peace and order in his dominion; secondly as the national and the first successful leader of Russia against the foreigner; and thirdly as the eldest son of the Russian Church, the close friend and ally of the principal Russian hierarch: they came to regard Moscow as the centre of all the religious and State interests of the whole Russian orthodox people.

A further cause of the success of the Moscow Princes was the trend of the population of Northern Russia towards political concentration, towards something which should bind together their distracted forces and establish a State seated on order, which would deliver them from the internecine strife of the smaller princes on the one hand and from the Tartar yoke on the other.

This is all the more easy to understand when we realize that from 1228–1462 Russia had to suffer ninety internecine wars, and up to 160 foreign wars, not to mention the individual losses incurred from bad harvests and innumerable fires.

Let us now consider the territorial division of Russia in the middle of the fifteenth century.

Almost the whole of the northern plain, including the north-west district running into the Gulf of Finland, belonged to the independent dominion of Novgorod, to which was appended the lower independent district of Pskov. All Western Russia (White Russia), together with a section of Great Russia, the district of Smolensk, belonged to Little Russia, with the neighbouring districts (which are to-day Great Russian) of Kursk, Orel, and even with parts of the Governments of Tula and Kaluga, belonged to the kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. Beyond Tula and Riazan, the vast region of the Steppes, reaching to the shores of the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Sea of Azov, was in the hands of the Tartars, whose central seats were in the Crimea and on the Lower Volga. In the east, on the Middle and Upper Volga, were the Tartars of Kazan, who had broken off from the Golden Horde in the first half of the fifteenth century, and the district of Viatka, which nominally belonged to Moscow, but which was by no means a submissive dependency. The centre of the plain consisted of a conglomeration of large and small principalities, among which was the principality of Moscow. Fifty miles to the north of Moscow was the hostile principality of Tver, while about sixty miles to the south of it, along the bank of the Oka, were the Tartars. About sixty miles to the west was Lithuania, its most dangerous foe. The whole of Russia was divided into a number of small countries, of which Moscow, although first among the principalities which belonged to Russian Princes, was not the largest, since the independent district of Novgorod and the kingdom of Lithuania exceeded it in size.

The whole of Russia could be then divided into two sections: the south-west section, which was in the power of Poland and Lithuania, and the north-east section, which paid tribute to the Tartars. There was danger from without and slavery within. Such was the position of affairs when Ivan III came to the throne in 1462.

There existed at the time, besides the free towns of Novgorod, Pskov, and Tver, four principalities, those of Riazan, Rostov, Yaroslav, and Tver. (Riazan was annexed by Moscow in 1417.) Ivan III continued the work of extension and concentration which had been begun by the earlier Princes of Moscow. But

there is this difference. Hitherto the annexation of a new district had usually been the outcome of a quarrel which was settled by force of arms, or a bargain struck between two princes: now the local population of the districts concerned began to take an interest in their political situation, and to ask openly for union with Moscow.

Thus the movement of extension ceased to consist solely of personal acts of violence and bargains, and began to assume a national and religious colour.

Under Ivan III and his son Vasilii, extensive annexations of territory were made by Moscow, so that by 1523[1] the kingdom of Moscow extended from the Ural Mountains to the mouth of the Neva and to the Narova, and from the Volga to the Dnieper; and the area of the kingdom, which had scarcely amounted to 15,000 square miles, when Ivan III came to the throne, under his reign and that of his son reached the figure of 40,000 square miles.

Moreover, in the reign of Ivan III (1430–1) the Russians threw off the Tartar yoke and refused to pay them tribute any longer, and the Tartars were no longer sufficiently a match for the Russians to be able to force them to do so. The Tartar yoke had lasted since 1233. Moscow was no longer a small Russian province surrounded by other Russian provinces, but a kingdom surrounded by foreign kingdoms, and this change in its outward position, naturally enough, brought about a change in its foreign policy. Hitherto foreign policy had concerned only a narrow circle of Russian Princes; henceforward Moscow entered into diplomatic relations with the countries of Western Europe. Its foreign policy now had a national basis, and it was founded on the principle that all parts of the Russian territory should belong to the kingdom of Moscow; that Russia should be one whole and united kingdom.

[1] In 1463 the Princes of Yaroslav, with their districts, gave up their independence and asked to be united to Moscow. In 1470–8 Novgorod was taken, and with it the whole district of Northern Russia. In 1472 Perm. In 1474 the Princes of Rostov sold to Moscow the remaining half of their principality which still remained in their possession. In 1485 Tver declared its allegiance to Moscow without the need of the latter striking a blow. In 1489 Viatka was finally taken. In 1490–1500 various minor princes acknowledged the sovereignty of Ivan. In 1510, during the reign of Ivan's successor, Pskov and its district, in 1514 the principality of Smolensk, which had been taken by Lithuania at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and from 1417–1523 the principalities of Chernigovo and Sieverskoe became dependencies of Moscow.

The natural consequence of this change in the position of the kingdom of Moscow, and of the creation of a foreign policy based on the national ideal of a united Russia, was a life and death struggle, destined to last for centuries, with the neighbouring Slav kingdoms, Poland and Lithuania, Little Russia, and all the remaining Slav nationalities.

Moscow was the weakest of all these kingdoms; Russia the weakest of all the nationalities: and Moscow prevailed. The race was to the slow; the battle to the weak.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST TSARS AND THE BOYARS

SINCE this book is not a history of Russia, and since my aim is only to sketch with a broad brush such phenomena in the past as are necessary for an understanding of the present, I shall not attempt to trace in detail the history of the Tsars of Moscow. I think I have said enough to explain how the supremacy of Moscow came about, and with it the idea of Russian national unity, and it will now be sufficient to dwell briefly on the main events in the evolution of Russian history, owing to which, after many struggles and vicissitudes, the idea was realized, and after narrowly escaping shipwreck, ultimately triumphed.

The new position which Ivan III had carved for the kingdom of Moscow, and the increased power that he had won, led him, perhaps half-unconsciously, to mark the new situation he had created by a change in the outward forms and symbols of sovereignty.

In 1472, when he married a second time, he chose for his wife Sofia Palæologa, the niece of the last of the Byzantine Emperors.

In marrying Ivan, Sofia Palæologa never gave up her title of Byzantine Empress. In this quality she had the right to receive foreign ambassadors. The marriage had therefore a political significance: the last descendant of the Emperors of the Orient transferred her precedence and her prestige to Moscow, and shared them with her husband. Ivan III, on his part, played up to the new situation which had arisen from his success, and the prestige which accrued to him from his marriage, by creating a new frame for his sovereignty. He sent to Italy for artists, who built the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow, the Palace of Granite, and a new stone palace in place of the

former wooden buildings. He instituted a new and complicated court ritual. He assumed the title of *Gosudar*—that is to say, Monarch, of all Russia. And in a treaty of 1494 he even forced the Lithuanian Government to recognize this title formally.

After the Tartar yoke had been thrown off, Ivan called himself, in treaties with foreign Powers, Tsar of all Russia.

Tsar is a contraction of the word "Cæsar," and is the same as the German word "Kaiser."

Sometimes in deeds and documents relating to internal affairs he added the title *Samoderzhets*, which is the Russian translation of the Byzantine title *αὐτοκράτωρ*, autocrat.

These titles did not have at this time the meaning which they now bear. They did not stand for absolute monarchs, but for monarchs who were independent of any foreign suzerainty. It was only after throwing off the Tartar yoke that Ivan was able to assume this title, which meant that he was no longer a vassal. Ivan now signed himself "Ivan, by the grace of God, Gosudar (Lord) of all Russia, Chief Prince of Vladimir, etc." And from the end of the fifteenth century onwards the Byzantine coat-of-arms, the double eagle, appears in his seal. At the same time that Ivan increased the outward ceremonial and pomp which hedged his sovereignty, he extended the prerogative of the Crown, by increasing the power of his eldest son and successor, to the detriment of that of the younger sons.

All this was the result of the transformation of the isolated principality of Moscow into the kingdom of Great Russia. The transformation had other results as well, and one of them is the change it brought about in that aristocratic upper class of society called the *Boyars*, who constitute one of the main factors of this period.

Already at the end of the thirteenth century, Boyars flocked to Moscow from all the principalities of Russia far and near. In the middle of the fifteenth century the Prince of Moscow was surrounded by illustrious Boyar families, who occupied the same position as the Boyars of the twelfth century, namely, that of advisers and independent servants of the Prince. From the middle of the fifteenth century onwards their character changed. More than 150 new families joined the Moscow Boyars. They came from every part of Russia; there were among them (besides Russians) Germans, Greeks, Lithuanians, Tartars, and Finns.

The majority of them belonged to titled princely families, and they mostly consisted of Princes whose districts had been swallowed up in the annexations of Ivan III. A new order of Boyars, therefore, arose, consisting of Princes, which outnumbered the old indigenous aristocratic families of Moscow.

The Moscow Boyars, from this time onward, formed an aristocracy who served the monarch and helped him to govern. They consisted of men whose forefathers had once possessed portions and districts of Russian territory; and they were organized in a complicated hierarchy called the *Mestnichestvo*, by which their position in the State, and their precedence among themselves, were determined neither by the will of the sovereign nor by their personal services, but by the services (that is to say, the pedigree) of their forefathers: and since their position in the State, and their rank, had to remain exactly what those of their forefathers had been, and neither their personal talent nor the favour of the Sovereign, nor the services rendered to him counted for anything, competition in service was rendered impossible. The duties and position of each Boyar were preordained by the *rozriadnia knigi*, or books of pedigree, and according to the institution of the *Mestnichestvo*, no man could hold an office inferior to any which his forefathers had held, or could accept a lower position than a man who had fewer ancestors than himself.

The change in the composition of the Boyar order brought about a change in their political outlook. They considered themselves to be the hereditary rulers of the Russian land, and they looked upon Moscow as the central point from which they were to govern Russia, only not in separate isolated entities as their forefathers had done, but collectively: they wished collectively to govern the united country.

The change in the nature and the outlook of the Boyars, which was the result of the formation of a united Russia, inevitably produced a change in the good relations which had hitherto existed between the Boyars and the Sovereign. Formerly the Boyar had sought Moscow in search of advantageous service. The advantage he derived from his services increased proportionately with the success of his master. His interests, therefore, coincided with those of his master. But now, at the end of the fifteenth century, the Boyars sought

Moscow, not in search of new service, but regretful of their lost independence, and out of need, " for living, not for choice."

The interests and the political feelings of the Boyars and the Sovereign were at variance. Owing to the changes in the State, the Grand Duke of Moscow found himself at the head of a nation, and enjoyed wide powers, and he had to deal with a ruling and highly ambitious class, whose complicated organization infringed the royal prerogative. And while the unification of Russia increased the pretensions and claims of the Boyars, it sharpened the intolerance and stiffened the uncompromising character of the Crown. There was no longer a community of interests, so there could no longer be harmony of relations. The situation brought about a conflict between the Sovereign and the Boyars. It lasted during the whole reign of Ivan Grozny (Ivan the Terrible), and the way in which this monarch dealt with the situation had far-reaching results—final as far as the Boyars were concerned, and, in the opinion of some historians (owing to the subsequent fruits of the policy), the cause of a period of anarchy which nearly brought about the ruin of Russia.

The conflict between the Boyars and the Sovereign is the main factor in the reign of Ivan the Terrible; apart from this, he completed the ruin of Novgorod; he conquered the kingdom of Kazan (1552); he made war on Livonia, and united Russia from the Caspian to the White Sea.

In spite of this, the part played by Ivan the Terrible is still a subject of historical dispute. It is thought by some historians to have been greatly exaggerated: they say that the stir his personality made in the world is out of all proportion to his political significance.[1] They argue that Ivan is interesting psychologically, owing to the blend of contradictory elements in his character, rather than politically; and dramatically (there can be no doubt of this), on account of his barbarity, his complex nature, and his blend of cunning and piety (affording priceless stuff for poets and dramatists[2]), rather than as a statesman. His political influence, they say, was negative. One of the chief problems of his reign was that created by the new situation of the autocracy and the new point of view of

[1] Kluchevski, *Course of Russian History*, Vol. II.

[2] *The Death of Ivan the Terrible*, by Alexis Tolstoi. A tragedy in five acts. Translated into English by T. H. Harrison. London, 1869.

the Boyars, which proceeded from the unification of Russia. His solution of this problem is criticized by some historians, who maintain that his policy was not that of a statesman, and that it showed him to be lacking in political tact and the larger political outlook, since the way in which he met the difficulty very nearly brought about the ruin of the Russian Empire. Thus Kluchevski, the foremost of modern Russian historians, thinks that Karamzin, the great Russian historian of the beginning of the century, was not greatly exaggerating in saying that the end of the reign of Ivan the Terrible, which started so brilliantly, was as disastrous to Russia as the Tartar invasion. Karamzin himself has drawn a masterly picture of Ivan. But he divides the reign sharply into two parts, and depicts Ivan as an angel during the first part and as a demon during the second part. There is, however, something to be said on the other side. In the first place, the fact remains that Ivan the Terrible did more towards the consolidation of the central executive than any Russian monarch had done as yet. He practically created the autocracy, and he attempted to give it a democratic character. He was the first Russian sovereign who harboured the conception that the end of statesmanship is the welfare of the people, and not the interests of a dynasty.

It can also be argued that the troubles which came about after his death, and which are most plausibly attributed to his policy, were also due to his leaving behind him a totally incapable successor. Ivan's government was entirely personal and autocratic. He bent the whole country to his will. When his imperious will was removed there was nothing to take its place. This is the eternal drawback of all personal government: when a commanding personality rules, he cannot, unless he has a capable heir, take any steps which will ensure the continuance of his rule and policy in the future. When Ivan the Terrible died Russia fell a prey to the schemes of rival intriguers.

It can also be argued that if the policy Ivan followed with regard to the Boyars, which we will deal with presently, was disastrous, no other policy, however wise, would have had a better result, once given the fact that there was no strong man in his family to succeed him.

But what makes us pause more than anything before utterly condemning the policy of Ivan, is that Peter the Great, who, apart

from his genial insight, is a better judge of the situation than any person living, however learned and however gifted, can possibly be, bestows unqualified approval on his statesmanship. "I always," he says, "took him for an example in civil and military administration, but I have not yet been able to go as far as he did. Only fools who are ignorant of the circumstances of his time, the nature of his people, and the greatness of his services, call him a tormentor."

Let us now briefly consider how Ivan the Terrible dealt with the Boyar problem. It will be first necessary to sketch briefly the character of the Monarch, because it explains his otherwise inexplicable conduct.

He was endowed by nature with a strong and supple intelligence distinguished by thoughtfulness and a sense of humour. But the circumstances of his childhood permanently affected his character, and gave it a fatal twist: on this point all historians are agreed. He was brought up among strangers, and amidst the revolting licence and lawlessness of the Boyars. Owing to this his natural timidity increased to nervous terror. The whole secret of the career of Ivan the Terrible is that he was Ivan the Terrified. He became eternally suspicious; he felt that he was surrounded by foes, and must be for ever on his guard: and his suspicion increased to the proportions of a disease. He was extremely precocious, with that precocity which comes from an early distrust of surroundings, and from an early implanted habit of suspecting everybody and everything.

He soon lost all sense of proportion and grew accustomed to immediately translating his feelings into deeds. He was one of the best writers and most eloquent orators of the sixteenth century. The nervousness of his temperament gave spontaneity, life, and unexpected turns to his style both in speech and on paper. His deeds were often wise and sometimes great; on the other hand, a still greater number of his acts, such as the destruction of Novgorod, on a mere suspicion, and the murder of his son show him in the character of a monster. And yet he was certainly not wholly a monster. If he met with any one who succeeded in vanquishing his suspicions and really winning his confidence, his devotion to such a one would be boundless.

He was completely lacking in moral balance; a mixture of contradictions: explosive excitability bursting all bounds, and

shrinking from no barbarity; suspicion and piety, common sense and insight; self-questioning reflectiveness, mysticism, and humour. For instance, he writes in his diary: "My body is weary and my soul is sick; the wounds of my body and of my soul increase in number, and there is no physician who can heal them. I have waited for some one who should share my sorrow, but none came; I have found none to solace me; they have given me evil in return for good, and hatred in exchange for love."

The man who writes this is the same man who annihilated Novgorod, merely on suspicion, without thought or inquiry. Like Nero, Ivan the Terrible was popular among the people, and long epic songs of his time have come down to us, in which the voice of the people bitterly laments the loss of its father. Here, again, historians agree that, whether his action may have been successful or disastrous, he had the welfare of the people at the bottom of his mind.

Such were the main characteristics of the man who was face to face with a new and different problem of statesmanship. And this is how he dealt with it. Towards the end of 1564, Ivan left Moscow with his family, his treasure-chest, and some few nobles, and betook himself to the monastery of the Trinity. Thence, in a month's time he sent two letters to Moscow. One was addressed to the Boyars, and in it he spoke his wrath against the whole of the Boyar class and the clergy. He accused the Boyars of taking no thought for the country, of defending it ill, of oppressing the peasantry and robbing the treasury and the land, and the clergy of approving and protecting them. He said that, being unable to endure this treasonable conduct, he had left the city.

The second letter was addressed to the people and to the merchants, and it was read out publicly to them; in it he absolved them of all guilt in the matter.

Moscow was overwhelmed by the event. A deputation consisting of Boyars and merchants, including the Archbishop of Novgorod, was sent to him, and prostrating themselves before the Tsar, the representatives of Moscow implored him to govern as he pleased, but to come back.

In February, 1565, he came back to Moscow, and consented to take up the reins of government, but on certain conditions;

namely, that he should give the traitors their deserts, and that their property should fall to the Treasury, and that all should submit to his sovereign will, and that none should interfere with his manner of government. Ivan then instituted what is called the *Oprichina*, which was a separate Court, with separate Boyars, courtiers, treasurer, and a whole court staff. He chose a thousand men and allotted to them a special part of the town; and to defray the expenses of this Court he set aside twenty towns, with their districts and certain other separate districts besides, whose land he gave to the new courtiers. The land and towns which he then allotted to himself did not form a connected strip of territory, but were scattered about here and there.

This he called his own kingdom: all the rest of the country under his dominion, with its soldiery and administration, the Tsar gave in charge to the Boyars, who were told to live on the land; and this half of the kingdom was called the *Zemshchina*, that is to say, the "Land."

The country was divided into two parts. The "Land" was to be governed by the "Duma," or Council of Boyars, which was to administrate it and only report on its proceedings to the Tsar; the other part, the "Court," was under the immediate control of the Tsar, who, however, also retained the control of the Duma. The Tsar, unable to cover his expenses, demanded from the "Land" a sum of 100,000 roubles (equivalent to about five million roubles now—£500,000). It is not easy to understand the political idea and aim of this arrangement. It did not solve the difficulty.[1]

Moscow was an absolute monarchy with an aristocratic administration. The power of the Crown was not limited by any political legislation; but the Crown recognized the existence and rights of a ruling class which had an aristocratic organization. The Boyars could not do without the Tsar, and the Tsar could not do without the Boyars. At the same time they could not live together in peace. Since they were unable either to agree or to part definitely, they attempted to live separately, side by side.

But the cause of the difficulty remained: the existence of the Boyar class which infringed the prerogative of the Sovereign.

[1] It was an attempt to create a governmental section of the whole people, less associated than the rest with the responsibility of production and bound by oath to execute all commands of its sovereign master.

In order to solve this difficulty, Ivan, it is said, had two courses open to him: he could do away with the Boyars as a governing class; and replace them by a more pliant instrument of government; or he could divide them, gather around him the more trustworthy elements of the Boyars, and govern with their aid. The first course would take time; the second course he did not choose to adopt. He has been blamed for choosing neither of the alternatives, but for fixing on a third course. He divided the kingdom into two parts, as we have already seen, and attacked the Boyars, not as a class, but individually and separately. He left them at the head of the administration of the country, but he cut off the heads of individual Boyars whom he suspected and disliked. The question is whether he could have attacked them more forcibly, as a class, since the Boyars had no support among the people, than he did by acting against them piecemeal. He is blamed for not having done so. It is said that Ivan was led by his suspicious nature to overrate the powers of the Boyars; and even granted that they were the traitors he supposed them to be, he ought then to have struck at the Boyars exclusively, whereas he not only confined himself to attacking the Boyars, but the Boyars did not even form the majority of his victims. The number of his victims, reckoned at the highest, was about ten thousand. He is blamed, not only for not following Cromwell's precept of never cutting off a useless head, but it is alleged that all the heads he cut off were useless—in the sense of innocuous. Whether another policy would have been more successful can be argued, but there is no doubt about the result of this policy. He divided the kingdom against itself. His "court" played the part of general executioner to the rest of the country. The creation of *Oprichina* brought about a kind of civil war; in one and the same town he set one set of people against another, calling one lot his people and bidding them kill the others and loot their houses. He ended by thinking solely of his personal safety, and to preserve this he struck blindly right and left, and by so doing he sowed the seeds of mutiny and anarchy which existed only in his own unbalanced mind—seeds which were to bear bitter fruit in the coming period; for the measures he took in self-defence nearly brought about the ruin of Russia. Such is the case against him, as it is stated by Kluchevski and others.

I have already partially indicated what can be said in his favour, namely, that he consolidated the political position of the kingdom of Russia and laid the foundations of the autocracy; that he was the first monarch to conceive the idea of a democratic autocracy; and that the anarchy which followed his death was the result of circumstances which were beyond his control.

There remains this to be said; whether another policy with regard to the Boyars would have been more successful or not, he certainly struck at the roots of their power. To have attacked them as a class would have been perhaps more statesmanlike, but they certainly never recovered from his individual and seemingly indiscriminate method of attack. Moreover, it is now impossible to decide whether his actions were as unpremeditated, as irresponsible, and as casual as they appear; there were depths of cunning in his mind, and the far-reaching logic, insight, and grasp of the situation, the statesmanship that nobody disputes to him in foreign affairs, may not have been altogether absent in his home policy, although it was marred by acts which were dictated by a mind diseased, by spasms of sick terror, and masked by his deeply rooted suspicion.

But whether Ivan's actions were the result of a sick fancy, or of profound forethought, masked by extravagant conduct, the following facts remain clear above all interpretations, theories, and criticism.

(*a*) He centralized the executive in Russia. He not only founded the autocracy, but conceived the plan of a democratic autocracy, the aim of which should be the welfare of the people, the weal of the community: to accomplish this he aimed at destroying the power of the nobles. He succeeded. He practically destroyed the Boyars, but the manner in which he did so is open to criticism, not only on the grounds of humanity, but also on the grounds of statesmanship. His policy divided the kingdom against itself, and was a partial cause of subsequent anarchy. Whether any other policy was possible in the circumstances is a question which must for ever remain doubtful.

(*b*) He left no capable successor in his family, and thereby opened a competition for the throne.

CHAPTER X

LAND TENURE IN RUSSIA IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES—THE FOUNDATION OF SERFDOM

THE system of land tenure in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Russia is an extremely knotty and complicated question. It is impossible to pass it over in silence, because in it we find the cause and explanation of serfdom, and, proceeding directly from this, the most important, the most fundamental of all the political and social questions of the Russia of to-day, namely, the land question. I will therefore try to sketch the system of land tenure which prevailed at this time as clearly and as briefly as possible.

I have already said in chapter VIII. how, in consequence of the colonization of the district of the Upper Volga in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a new order of hereditary allotments came into existence. I also stated in chapter VI. that Russian society, in the dukedoms of Kiev, previous to the invasion of the Tartars, was divided into three classes (four, if you count the slaves). The Princes and their *druzhini*, their men-at-arms or militia, the class of ordinary freemen, consisting of traders, and the rural population. When the Volga district was colonized this same class division subsisted in the newly opened country. Under the older order, in the Kiev days, the Princes, with the help of the armed merchants, ruled and protected the rest of the population. Under the new order, with the disappearance of the system of appanages, owned in turn and according to seniority, the members of the princely family, which continued to multiply, not being able to find vacant principalities, were led to split up their own hereditary allotments. Such an allotment was called a *votchina*, which means literally a "father's holding";

consequently, in some places the dukes' allotments were subdivided into microscopical holdings. Secondly, the Princes grew poorer and poorer; and thirdly, the solidarity between the Princes, which had been maintained owing to the quarrels on the question of seniority and the rivalry for the possession of the throne of Kiev, which united more than it divided them, disappeared. Every Prince, isolated in his holding, acted for himself and took no thought of his neighbour. Therefore the Prince, with the disappearance of common interests which it was his whole duty to defend, gradually ceased to be a ruler and became more and more a landlord; and gradually the population came to be merely in the position of tenants. Apart from the Princes' slaves, the free population of the Princes' holding consisted of two classes:

(1) The men of service.
(2) The villeins (*Chernie Liudi*).

The men of service again consisted of two classes:

(1) The Boyars.
(2) The free, armed servants.

The free, armed servants served the Prince of their own free will and according to compact. They recognized the authority of the Prince over them as long as they were in his service, *but they were free to transfer their service from one Prince to another.* Moreover, if a free servant ceased serving one Prince, he maintained his rights over the land he had acquired in the service of the Prince whom he abandoned. The relations of the villeins to the Prince were of a similar nature. The villein, whether he were rural or urban, recognized the authority of the Prince, paid him tribute, submitted to his jurisdiction only during the period that he enjoyed the use of his land; he could transfer his service to another principality if he considered the agricultural conditions to be more favourable there, just as the men of service could transfer their military service to another Prince; all his ties to his first landlord were annulled. The "free servant" was therefore an independent mercenary soldier of the Prince, and the villein was the paying husbandman of the Prince's land. Neither of them formed a political entity in the principality, but each was merely an economic accident.

Among the men of service of the Princes, besides the Boyars

and the "free servants," there were also "court servants" who formed his courtiers. And besides these classes of free men—men of service and villeins—were the slaves who did not form a social class, in the legal sense of the word, since they had no rights. The Church occupied a separate and special position; it was not a class but a society, with its own special privileges and administration.

When Moscow became a kingdom, all these grades of society, which had been the distinctive feature of the period of princely allotments before Moscow absorbed the minor principalities, either continued to exist unchanged or left a strong trace on the governed classes of the new kingdom. I have already indicated the political part played by the Boyars; what I wish now to explain is how the system of land tenure arose.

The constant menace of foreign invasion, which hung over the kingdom of Moscow, made it imperative for the Tsar of Moscow to dispose of a numerous armed force. As the military forces increased with necessity, the problem arose how to defray the expenses of their maintenance. Hitherto the Princes' servants had been remunerated for their services in three different ways:

(1) By money.

(2) By "fathers' holdings," which the Prince helped them to acquire.

(3) By *kormlenia*, revenues proceeding from certain Government appointments which were given to the men of service.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, these sources of remuneration were not sufficient to provide for the upkeep of the ever-increasing number of the free, armed servants. The circumstances demanded new sources of revenue which, after Northern Russia had been united under the domination of Moscow, were not forthcoming, because the increase of territory had not been accompanied by a sensible increase of trade and industry. The only new source of capital was the land (immense in its size and inhabited by peasants), which had been acquired by the Tsar of Moscow.

And since the nature of the foes which Moscow had to contend with called for swift mobilization and a constant state of readiness, the idea naturally arose of distributing the men of service in the interior of the country, especially on the frontier, and in making the landlords into a living barrier against the alien in-

roads from the Steppes. The vast stretches of territory lately acquired by Moscow were the means at hand; the land became in the hands of the sovereign a means of keeping up his military forces, the landlords became an instrument of national defence; and they, in their dual capacity of husbandmen and defenders of the soil, produced a system of land tenure which, arising in the fifteenth century, lasted till the seventeenth century. The result, which is felt to this day, was the Manor (*Pomestie*).

A manor consisted of a portion of Government or Church land granted by the Sovereign to a servant, in return for service and on condition that he should serve; it was not only a reward for his services, but it gave him the means by which his service became possible, that is to say, a means of upkeep. The ownership was temporary, just as his service was temporary, but in practice both generally lasted a lifetime; the conditional, personal, and temporary nature of the manor distinguishes it from the *votchina*, or "hereditary holding," which was the complete and hereditary possession of its owner.

The introduction of this new system had many results. In the first place, it affected the nature of the "fathers' holdings." It limited the number of people having the right to obtain such holdings, and it restricted the free disposal of them.

The new system was founded on the principle that the man who served should possess land. The natural corollary of the principle was that the man who possessed land should serve. Hitherto all free classes in Russia had the right to own land. Henceforth, as the result of this new principle, the right of administering one's own hereditary holding became a privilege—a reward for service. In the sixteenth century, in the kingdom of Moscow, all owners of hereditary holdings were men of service. The man who inherited a holding in the kingdom of Moscow could only continue to hold it hereditarily by service. As soon as service became incumbent on the tenant of an hereditary holding, only a man capable of rendering service personally or through his servants could become such a tenant. Consequently the law began to restrict the right of alienating the holdings, lest they should fall to men incapable of service. Besides this, and besides artificially developing agriculture in Russia, it created a local society of gentry (*uiezdnia dvorianskaia*

obtchestva), local agricultural corporations, and more important still, it prepared the way for a radical and momentous change in the fate of the peasantry—the binding of the peasant to the soil.

This change arose out of the economic conditions which were brought about by the system of land tenure. At the end of the sixteenth century, the peasants were still free husbandmen who had no land of their own, but who lived and worked on the manor belonging to the "free servants"—the Boyars and their children. In return for the use of the land, the peasants were compelled to work so many hours for the landlord, to pay fixed dues and to fulfil certain duties towards the State. They could always transfer their services from one landlord to another; they enjoyed the "right of voluntary migration." [1] Such a proceeding was highly advantageous to the rich landlords and to the monasteries, who possessed the larger estates and not enough working hands to farm them. Both the rich landlords and the monasteries did all they could to attract the greatest number of peasants possible by offering them various advantages; and frequently the smaller and poorer landlords found themselves deprived of working hands and were ruined. Now the chief military forces of the kingdom were recruited from these same poorer landlords who, since they were unable to farm their land, owing to a lack of peasants, became *ipso facto* incapable of serving the State. Moreover, owing to the right of "free migration" enjoyed by the peasantry, the apportioning of dues and duties became exceedingly difficult. The right of migration, however, although legal in theory, grew to be more and more difficult in practice, because a peasant could not in practice leave his landlord if he were still in his debt, which was nearly always the case.

The State, foreseeing the disastrous effect on the military defence of the country, which would ensue if the peasants continued to enjoy the right of "free migration," gradually restricted the right by a series of regulations, whose effect was to hedge the peasants with a network of prohibitive measures, the idea being to check the migration and to bind the peasant to his land. For instance, if he left the property of one landowner, he was bound to pay back rent for the house where

[1] The peasant was, as we should say technically, a villein in gross, but not regardant.

he had lived, to pay him for the use of it, and to remunerate him for the advantages he had enjoyed.

It was Boris Godunov who, in order to protect the small landowners from the disastrous effects of the wholesale migration of the peasants to the more powerful and richer nobles, first faced the problem and made an attempt to remedy it by legislation. In 1597 he made the first law whose object was to check the migration. According to his law, if a peasant left his abode, the landowner could insist on his return during the five years following his departure. No mention was made in it of the right of the peasants of transferring their services from one manor to another on St. George's Day. Hence the law of 1597 is sometimes considered as the immediate cause of the permanent binding of the peasant to the soil (*Krepnostnoe pravo*). But it was not made with that object. The right of migration on St. George's Day was acknowledged by later legislation in 1601–2. And it was fifty-two years later, in 1649, when the laws respecting the peasant and the land were codified in the *Ulozhenie* of the Tsar Alexis, that the peasant became in reality and permanently *adscriptus glebæ*, although in practice he still retained a certain measure of freedom of action. According to the *Ulozhenie*, nobody had the right to receive on his land a peasant who had run away from his manor; and the time-limit beyond which a landlord lost the right of reclaiming a peasant who had migrated from his original abode was abolished. The landlord was obliged to provide him with a portion of land and with agricultural implements. The landlord could not divorce him from his land and employ him on his own farm. His live stock, although he only had the loan of it, could not be taken from him by force. The position of the peasant towards the landlord was a question of mutual compact. The binding of the peasant to the soil, therefore, was not the expression of the chance whim of an irresponsible despot. It was the slow and gradual outcome of economic conditions created by the growth of manors in Russia. The Government merely stepped in, and in its own interests, as well as in those of the community, crystallized into legislation a state of affairs which had already assumed a definite shape. Thus it came about that the peasant was bound to the soil; the ultimate result of it was serfdom which lasted until 1861; but serfdom was not instituted simultaneously with these new laws, nor was it

the immediate consequence of them. What serfdom meant was that not only the peasant was bound to the soil, but that the landlord had unbounded legal rights over the person of the serf—rights which were independent of the peasant's relations to the soil. When serfdom became a fact, the serf was legally subject to the personal authority and domination of his master. The personal and private legal authority of the master over the slave was, as I have just said, by no means simultaneous with the law which bound the peasant to the soil.

But when the free migration of the peasant from one landlord to another came to be regarded as the chief cause of disorder and abuses in the rural population, and in proportion as the necessity of preventing migration was recognized and measures to prevent it were taken, the peasant came to be regarded as being bound not to the land, but to the *landlord*. So slow and so gradual was the crystallization of this idea, that the question of the personal freedom of the peasant was not decided even in principle at the beginning of the third decade of the seventeenth century.

The three main factors in process which led from the binding of the peasant to his personal slavery were as follows:

(1) Registers, which were made with the object of collecting the taxes; they included the peasant's contract with his landlord. The register consequently became a means of legally binding the peasant's sons and grandsons.

(2) Loans made by the landlord to the peasants. The landlord gradually established a right on the live stock and the agricultural implements of the peasant, which was based economically on the loans which the peasant contracted with him.

(3) The obligation on the part of the peasant to pay the landlord rent in return for the use of his farm.

Since the landlord was financially responsible for a given amount of land which entailed the work of a given number of peasants, he came to consider that he could use peasant labour at his own discretion. The peasant grew to be, in his eyes, an instrument of production which he was financially responsible for; the more the financial responsibility increased, the more he came to consider the instrument to be a thing of his own which he could do as he liked with.

What differentiates Russian serfdom from the serfdom of

other countries is that it was not an immemorial institution, handed down from feudal times and made permanent by the brute force of the ruling classes, but the slow growth of an economic process which was recognized and became law long after it had taken shape in practice. Moreover, the legislation which crystallized it, was not drawn up with a view to the mutual advantages of the classes which it affected, but was an opportunist makeshift, which was regarded at the time it was made as being temporary. Owing to the faulty manner in which the legislation was drawn up, its result was totally different from what its framers had aimed at. What they had aimed at was the temporary solution of the economic problem of the peasantry; what they achieved was a state of personal slavery for the peasantry which lasted for nearly two centuries.

CHAPTER XI

THE TIME OF TROUBLE

LET us now take up the thread of historical events which we let drop at the death of Ivan the Terrible. I have already said that the latter events of his reign and the manner in which he dealt with the nobles had sown bitter seeds. This was bound to happen, unless he had exterminated the nobility wholesale; the seeds were soon to bear fruit.

The death of Ivan the Terrible is followed by a period in Russian history which is like a series of Elizabethan chronicle plays, and which contains trenchant characters, scenes and episodes of tragic intensity, glowing with colour; dabbled with blood; loud with turmoil and fighting, like those of a tragedy by Marlowe.

This is called in Russian history "the Time of Trouble." It lasted about fifteen years, from the death of Tsar Feodor, the successor of Ivan the Terrible, which ended the dynasty of the Ruriks, to the accession to the throne of Michael, the founder of the dynasty of the Romanovs, that is to say, from 1598–1613. During this period the kingdom of Russia was shaken to its foundations, and very nearly succumbed altogether. It was called by contemporary historians the "Tragœdia Muscovita."

The main facts are as follows:—

Ivan the Terrible, two years before his death, in 1581, killed his son Ivan in a fit of passion, when the latter was taking the part of his wife in a quarrel. Ivan the Terrible was inconsolable, but the fact remained that the Tsarevitch was no more, and the successor to the throne was Ivan's second son, Feodor. Feodor was a kind of Parsifal or "reiner Thor," one of the meek and humble, the

poor in spirit; a type which has always been, and still is, deeply reverenced in Russia, and which runs through the whole of Russian literature, from the Folk Tales, where Ivan the Fool is tormented by his brothers, but finally inherits the kingdom, to the novels of Dostoievski. Such a man is naturally more fitted for the monk's cell than for a throne. His kingdom is not of this world; and the advent of this smiling, gentle, ingenuous creature, whose thoughts were centred on the next world, to the tumultuous throne of Moscow, had about it a tragic irony.

Ivan the Terrible saw that Feodor was quite unfit to rule, and appointed a committee of nobles to help him, the leading part in which soon fell into the hands of Boris Godunov, the Tsar's brother-in-law. Boris Godunov, a shrewd and ambitious man, became practically dictator; and his rule was more autocratic than any which had yet been experienced. But it was as wise and as prudent as it was autocratic; and during the nominal reign of Feodor, which lasted fourteen years, the country enjoyed peace and security.

Ivan the Terrible left behind him, besides Feodor, a younger son called Dimitri, who lived away from Moscow in the town of Uglich with his mother. In 1591 the news came to Moscow that Dimitri had been murdered. A commission of nobles was sent to investigate the matter; under the direction of Godunov's secret rival, Prince Shuïski, they attempted to prove that Dimitri had killed himself in a fit, but nothing came of it, and the incident was closed.

In 1598 the Tsar Feodor died, and the dynasty of the Ruriks ended with him, and the "Time of Trouble" began. Boris Godunov was chosen as his successor by the *Zemski Sobor* (National Assembly).

Boris Godunov continued to govern as wisely as Tsar as he had done when he was Regent and virtually dictator, but he was not popular; he did not inspire confidence; he was the victim of every kind of evil report; and the most persistent of the rumours concerning him was that the death of Dimitri the Tsarevitch had been his doing.

At last, in 1604, the news was spread that Godunov's agents had failed in their work; that a child had been substituted for Dimitri and had met his death; and that the real Dimitri was alive and about to claim the throne. A man, claiming to be the

true Dimitri, appeared in Poland; and now, after three centuries, in spite of the minutest research and infinite labour on the part of students and historians, the enigma of this strange being is still unguessed.[1] Nearly all historians are agreed that the man was an impostor; few, on the other hand, are agreed as to who he was. And it is, on the whole, more difficult to prove that he is any of the people he is supposed to be, than to prove that he was the son of Feodor.

Whoever he was, whether an impostor or the true heir, he marched into Russia at the head of Polish troops and Cossacks, and although he was defeated in the field by Godunov's troops, he won the support of the people. In 1605 Boris Godunov died (he was probably poisoned),[2] and Moscow opened its gates to Dimitri. Dimitri was crowned in Moscow. He was a remarkably gifted man, and he began to do what Peter the Great achieved a hundred years later, namely, to Westernize Russia. He wished to send Russians abroad to learn from the West; he founded schools; he changed the heavy ritual of the Moscow Tsars; he broke with certain Russian customs, such as sleeping after meals and going to the *Bania*. He also granted facilities to English merchants, and allowed them to travel in Russia without paying taxes. Before starting from Russia he had been received into the Catholic Church, and he probably dreamed of a union of the two churches; but his conversion was kept secret. In all his doings and ways he was Western and modern. He avoided committing acts of cruelty, and his manner of behaviour was simple (like that of Peter the Great later), and free from court pomposity and ceremonial.

The mother of the slain Dimitri declared him to be her son, and his mother's recognition of him confirmed the popularity which he already enjoyed among the people. But the Boyars were not satisfied with the state of affairs; they had invented an impostor merely to get rid of Godunov, and now they proceeded to get rid of the impostor, who had turned out to be something quite different from what they had bargained for. A plot

[1] For the history of this extraordinary, enigmatical, and interesting being, see *La Russie et le Saint Siège*, by Le P. Pierling, S.J., Paris, 1901, Vol. III. All the State archives with regard to the false Dimitri were destroyed.

[2] Pierling and Kluchevski. Other interesting sources of information in Russian are *Kto bwil pervyi Lzhedimitri*. Kostomarov, St. Petersburg, 1864. *Ocherki po istorii Smuty*. Platonov, St. Petersburg, 1699. Pushkin wrote a tragedy, *Boris Godunov*, and Count Alexis Tolstoi also.

was organized by Prince Shuïski, and Dimitri was murdered in May, 1606, after having reigned exactly eleven months.

After the death of Dimitri, the anarchy and confusion brought about immediately by the ending of the dynasty and the appearance of a pretender, increased; this era of trouble arose out of the universal discontent which had been sown by the acts of Ivan the Terrible and the despotism of Boris Godunov. It also arose because the Russians, at this date, looked upon the monarchy as an hereditary holding, and were loath to recognize an elected monarch; this facilitated the action of pretenders. Moreover, the complicated constitution of the State, and the uneven distribution of State offices, led to social division and anarchy. The anarchy was accompanied by famine, by Cossack raids and other circumstances of this kind, and its immediate result was the creation of a new dynasty.

Before this came about the disorder reached large proportions. The appearance of the first pretender was the beginning of an epidemic of pretenders, which was to last almost until the end of the eighteenth century. When the first pretender was killed, and was succeeded by Prince Shuïski, who became Tsar Vasili, new pretenders appeared in different parts of Russia. The anarchy which Ivan the Terrible had sown by his policy of setting one class against another, and which grew stronger from having been pent up by the unmitigated despotism of Boris Godunov, burst all bonds; disorder ran riot. Sometimes two pretenders appeared at the same time, and were acknowledged as Tsar simultaneously in different parts of Russia. The appearance of a pretender was a boon to every good-for-nothing who wished to live by loot at the expense of other people. In 1608 a new false Demetrius, a brigand, supported by the Cossacks, marched on Moscow and established himself at Tushino, eight miles from Moscow. The Tsar was besieged in his own capital. In order to force the King of Poland to prevent Poles from flocking to the false Demetrius as they were doing, the Tsar made an alliance with Sweden. As soon as the King of Poland, Sigismund III, heard of this, he declared war on Moscow and besieged Smolensk.

The situation seemed at one moment as if it were going to be saved by Prince Michael Skopin-Shuïski, the Tsar's nephew, who defeated the false Demetrius and his allies and raised the siege of Moscow. But the brilliant Skopin, the nephew of the

Tsar and the hope of Russia, died almost immediately after entering Moscow, and in June, 1610, the Tsar's troops were severely defeated by the Poles at Klushino. The Tsar Vasili was asked to abdicate, which he did, and Moscow was left without a Tsar.

The Swedes, taking advantage of the position, from having been allies became foes, and took the offensive in the region of Novgorod. The Poles continued to besiege Smolensk; the whole of the south of Russia was on the side of the pretender. The kingdom had no centre and was falling to pieces. Almost every town seemed to be acting on its own account, and the State had become a shapeless and mutinous federation.

The Moscow Patriarch and the Boyars decided to enter into negotiations with the Poles. The Poles proposed that the Boyars should accept a Polish king, the son of Sigismund III, as Tsar, and the Boyars accepted the offer. In August, 1610, Moscow took the oath to Vladislav, the Crown Prince of Poland, and the city was garrisoned by Polish troops. An embassy was sent to King Sigismund to arrange matters, but the Polish King demanded as a preliminary condition that he should retain his faith; it appeared that he had no intention of sending his son to Moscow, but he had decided to be Tsar himself. The Polish King's intentions became known at Moscow simultaneously with the news of the death of the false pretender Demetrius, and the people of Moscow realized that the Poles were aiming at the destruction of Russia.

The position of affairs at the end of 1611 seemed desperate. Smolensk had surrendered to the Poles after an arduous siege; the city of Moscow had been burnt, and the Poles occupied the Kremlin; the Swedes occupied Novgorod, and were putting forward a candidate to the throne of Moscow. A new false Demetrius, in the place of the one who had just been killed, appeared at Pskov, and the kingdom was still without king or government.

At the end of 1611, at the last gasp of the latest breath of the political forces of the nation, religious and national feeling was awakened in the country. At this critical moment Dionysius, the Archimandrite of the Monastery of the Trinity, and Abraham Palitzin, his cellarer, sent letters all over Russia, calling on the people to " fight the foes of the kingdom of Moscow, and to stand

until the end for the Faith and the Fatherland." These letters had the effect of producing a rising in Novgorod, which was led by the "Elder" of that city, a butcher named Kuzma Minin. The nobles, the men-at-arms, the gentry of the towns, and children of the Boyars joined him, and they chose as their military leader Prince Pozharski. They spent four months in preparation, and in six months' time they moved on Moscow, making many recruits on the way. Beneath the walls of Moscow they found a squadron of Cossacks under Prince Trubetskoi, and the gentry feared these more than they did the Poles, and refused to serve with them; but it soon became clear that without the aid of the Cossacks they could effect nothing, and during three months nothing was done. At last the monk Palitzin persuaded the Cossacks to support the gentry. In October, 1612, the so-called "Chinese town" of Moscow (a trading quarter with walls round it outside the Kremlin) was taken; and on the 27th of November the Russian gentry, the people, and the clergy entered the Kremlin.

Soon after this the leaders of the national movement, the Boyars and the clergy, decided that a Tsar should be elected by a national assembly. In the beginning of 1613, deputies, chosen in all the different parts of the country, arrived in Moscow. This was the first national assembly with elements drawn from all classes of the population which took place in Russia.

On the first Sunday of Lent, February 21st, 1613, after three days' preliminary fasting and prayer, Michael Feodorovich Romanov, the son of Feodor Nikitin (who came of a popular Boyar family—probably the only popular Boyar family in the sixteenth century, which was connected with the older dynasty[1]), was elected Tsar. He was to be the grandfather of Peter the Great.

[1] The son of Roman Nikita was the brother of Anastasia, one of Ivan the Terrible's wives.

CHAPTER XII

THE RIVALRY WITH POLAND—THE COSSACKS—THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

IN the last chapter we have seen that Russia was on the verge of becoming a Polish province. There seemed at one moment to be nö alternative between accepting the rule of the brigand who called himself Demetrius and electing a Polish Tsar. The heart of Russia was in the hands of the Poles, and the Russians asked the King of Poland to send them his son to rule over them, on condition that they should be allowed to retain their national faith. We have seen that the King of Poland demanded more and obtained less; his action created a national movement, which had the effect, in the darkest hour of Russian history, of driving the Poles from Russia: just as in the darkest hour of French history Joan of Arc created a national movement which drove the English out of France. The weaker became the stronger. That Poland was once upon a time the great kingdom, the home of culture and intellect, and Russia a mere backward Slav state oppressed by its more powerful neighbours, is a fact that is not usually realized by the world at large, and entirely left out of account by politicians who, when at various times the Poles have struggled to throw off the Russian domination, have expressed their indignation against Russia and their sympathy with Poland. Such sympathy, no doubt, was perfectly justified, because the Russians had become the stronger then, but it is interesting to speculate how very little would have been needed to reverse the situation. In that case the Liberal hearts of Europe would have had to beat with the cause of oppressed Russia, and to express indignation at the tyranny of Poland; for the Poles were every inch as overbearing as their brother Slavs, and had they definitely got the

upper hand, the Russians would have doubtless had every cause to send weeping patriots to every capital of Europe.

When the Poles complain, as they often do, that they who are the more cultivated, the more advanced of the two Slav races, are under the domination of the less cultivated and the less advanced, when they say with pride "Nous l'avons eu votre Kremlin Russe," they forget that they *were* once the stronger, that they did possess not only Little Russia, but at one time the centre and heart of Russia, and were not able to keep it, and that this proves that there must have been something morally wanting in them. The Russians, being the weaker, developed something, a spirit, a desire, an aspiration, like that of Jack the Giant Killer, which enabled them, although the weaker both numerically and territorially, to get the best of the fight. The Poles therefore have surely no historical grievance such as the Irish have. They have only themselves to thank. They were, as they allege, the superior race; they failed, as always happens in fairy tales, because they were proud of their superiority.

But the thing which interests us outsiders is this: the quarrel between Russia and Poland was not the crushing of a small and weak Poland by a large and powerful Russia; it was not a question like that of England and the Transvaal, or that of Germany and the Danes, but a long rivalry and contest between two kindred races which were divided by a question of creed, the Poles being Catholics and the Russians Orthodox. The struggle swayed to and fro: victory was now on this side, now on that; and as each alternately obtained the upper hand, it forced its religion on the conquered race. Both races were equally intolerant. The first round of the contest was fought during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Ivan IV twice made war on Poland: the first time in 1553, when he invaded Lithuania, took Polotsk, and obtained from Poland twenty towns which he had taken in Livonia; and the second time in 1578, when fortune favoured the Poles—the Russians were fighting the Poles and the Swedes simultaneously—who, under the brilliant leadership of Batori, defeated the Russians, but were unable to force the town of Pskov, which suffered a long and terrible siege, to capitulate. In 1562 Ivan concluded a ten years' truce with the Poles, by which the towns he had acquired in Livonia, including Polotsk,

were given up. (The struggle for Livonia had lasted twenty years.)

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, towards the end of the "Time of Tróuble," Poland seemed to have got the upper hand; but by the very fact of its temporary supremacy it created in its kindred rival a sense of nationality and unity, owing to which Russia emerged victorious from the struggle, and crushed its rival. Pushkin, in a famous poem addressed to the "Slanderers of Russia" on the occasion of a Polish rising, writes as follows:—

"Already long ago amongst ourselves
These races twain have carried on a war;
And more than once, first we, then they again,
Beneath the alien terror have succumbed.
Leave us in peace, for you have never read
The chronicle that's dabbled with our blood;
You cannot feel this: foreign is to you
This quarrel between brothers of one race."

As far back as the epoch of the Princes of Kiev, a prophetic leader said that it would be impossible for the Poles or the Russians ever to lay down their arms until one side or the other should be definitely worsted.

When the Poles were driven from Moscow by the national movement, and Michael Romanov was elected Tsar, the matter did not end there. The "Time of Trouble" had far-reaching results, and the rivalry with Poland which they brought to a head was far from being ended when the Poles left Moscow. The result of the "Time of Trouble" manifested itself in the internal as well as in the external situation of Russia.

As far as the internal situation is concerned, the "Time of Trouble" gave a new turn to the political tradition of the country; eventually a situation was created which demanded a greater concentration of national forces against foreign foes than had hitherto been necessary. Thus a new order of political ideas and a new conception of government arose among the people.

Hitherto the Tsars of Moscow had governed with the aid of an aristocratic class, the Boyars. Ivan the Terrible, as has already been said, dealt a great blow at this class and practically destroyed it. The "Time of Trouble" carried the work of destruction still farther. The ranks of the old Boyar families grew thinner

and thinner, they were filled by new men, without tradition, unaccustomed to rule, who were drawn from the lower classes, sons of popes and sometimes butchers; men such as these even penetrated into the Council of the Boyars, the Boyar Duma, which grew to be smaller and less and less of an aristocratic institution.

The relations between the Boyars and the Sovereign, which were usually arbitrary and based on hazard rather than on law, changed with the extinction of the old dynasty. Since the Tsar was elected, the kingdom was no longer only regarded as his personal estate; and the Boyars and those who took their place wished to have a share in the government. But the Boyar Duma was now no longer the only administrative institution besides the Sovereign.

Side by side with it another institution appears—the National Assembly, the *Zemski Sobor*, which consisted of members elected from all ranks of the people of the kingdom. Since the Tsar was elected by the will of the people, he was obliged to govern with their co-operation. The National Assembly, in co-operating with the Boyar Council, counterbalanced its influence, which tended to restrict the power of the Sovereign. Consequently the power of the Sovereign became ambiguous: officially it was an autocracy; in reality it was elective, and bound by an unwritten contract with a ruling class, which was represented by the Boyar Duma. Such a state of things was, naturally, only temporary, and ended when the position of the Sovereign grew to be solid. But one of the most important factors of this period is the National Assembly and the change in its nature and significance.

National Assemblies had been summoned in the sixteenth century; the first one was summoned by Ivan IV in 1550; but they consisted of the representatives of central and local administration. After the "Time of Trouble," the elective elements grew to be more numerous than the administrative elements, and the assembly became truly national.

From this time onward National Assemblies appear from time to time in the course of Russian history. They appeared at this moment because the authority of the Sovereign had newly been re-established, and he felt the imperative need of the co-operation of the people.

"Popular representation," writes Kluchevski in his *Course*

of Russian History, " arose in our country not in order to restrict the central authority, but in order to confirm it. Herein lies the difference between it and Western European representation."

The question then naturally occurs, why it is that popular representation as represented in the National Assembly did not henceforward become a permanent factor in Russian political life. The answer is to be found in the class division which existed at this time. The manner in which the economic problems of the country had been solved for the time being divided the population into classes, and reduced the greater part of the peasants to the position of slaves in the hands of the landlords. The National Assembly ceased consequently to be national, and became representative of the upper classes, which in their turn, owing to their conflicting interests, were divided against themselves.

" The National Assembly," says Kluchevski, " which at first constituted an element of support to the new dynasty and a co-operative instrument of government, became less indispensable to it as the position of the dynasty grew stronger; and society, split up as it was into class divisions, and administrative obligations, depending on class, was not able to transform the assembly into a permanent representative institution."

Another result of the " Time of Trouble " on the internal situation of Russia was the devastation of the country. Villages everywhere were laid waste by the various raids and counter-raids, and by the prolonged warfare. Smoking villages full of corpses were everywhere to be seen; disorder and confusion prevailed, and this created a universal discontent which expressed itself in risings and mutinies. Hence the seventeenth century in Russia is a period of internal mutiny and external war.

Let us now turn to the situation of the country with regard to other countries, and see how it was affected by the epoch of troubles.

The father and grandfather of Ivan the Terrible, as we have seen, extended the frontiers of the kingdom of Moscow to the Dnieper. Ivan the Terrible annexed the districts of the Upper and Lower Volga, and extended his dominions to the Urals and to the Caspian Sea by taking Astrakhan. His son Feodor established himself on the Gulf of Finland. During the " Time of Trouble " Moscow was driven out of the western dis-

tricts it had acquired during the sixteenth century. The Poles acquired the districts of Smolensk and Severski, and cut off Moscow from the Dnieper; the Swedes drove the Russians from the Baltic. In 1618, Russia had not only abandoned the aims of the elder dynasty—to make a single Russia out of all the Russian principalities and to extend the frontiers of that kingdom to the limits of the Russian plain—but part of what had already been acquired was lost. After the "Time of Trouble," the new dynasty was forced to carry on a series of wars, for the sake of its existence, in order to retain what it possessed and to win back what it had lost.

During the reigns of Michael and his successor, Russia was twice at war with Poland, and once with Sweden. During the reign of Feodor, Russia was at war with Turkey: so that out of seventy years (1613–82), thirty years were spent in war, and sometimes with two different countries at once.

Poland was Russia's most dangerous enemy, and so we are brought back once more to the rivalry with Poland which is the main factor in the external situation of Russia during this period.

After the Poles had been driven from Moscow, the rivalry between the two kingdoms was once more brought to a head by the situation of Little Russia. The Little Russian question was the task which Russian foreign policy had to face during the seventeenth century.

In 1386, the Grand Duke of Lithuania married the Queen of Poland and ascended the Polish throne. About the beginning of the fifteenth century, many districts which were under the domination of Lithuania were practically Russian; they exceeded both in territory and population the Lithuanian principality to which they were subject. The Russian language was spoken there, and the orthodox creed professed. But when Lithuania and Poland were united, the Polish influence, and not the influence of Russia, began to be felt. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a landed aristocracy, similar to the Polish, had grown up in the western districts of Russia, subject to Lithuania, under the suzerainty of its Grand Duke. Both the central and the local administration of Lithuania and Western Russia were in the hands of these aristocrats, or "Pans" as they were called. (*Pan* is the Polish for "Monsieur.") The Polish Government,

in order to strengthen the dynastic links between Poland and Lithuania, made an energetic Catholic propaganda in Lithuanian Russia (which was orthodox about the middle of the fifteenth century), and this met with determined resistance on the part of the Russians; consequently towards the end of the fifteenth century the orthodox Russians and some of the Lithuanian Princes went over to Moscow.

Then came the reformation in Western Europe. Protestantism spread rapidly in Lithuania; the rulers of Lithuania were indifferent in matters of religion; the Catholic propaganda ceased, and the orthodox population of Lithuania ceased also to be hostile to Poland. The result was that in 1569 a permanent union was made between Poland and Lithuania at the Diet of Liublin. According to the agreement made at the Diet, the Poles obtained Lithuania; the districts of South-west Russia, Volyn, and the Ukraine (the present Governments of Kiev and Poltava, with a part of Podolia) fell under the jurisdiction of the Polish Crown.

South-western Russia (which, after the Tartar invasion, had at first been administered by the offshoots of the dynasty of Rurik and their militias in collaboration with the more important towns, and had gradually fallen into the hands of the aristocratic landlords), at the time of the union of Poland and Lithuania, fell under the immediate rule of the Polish-Lithuanian gentry: an armed class of gentry (*Shliakhta*) which now dominated the aristocracy and was the ruling class in the kingdom. They made the peasants into serfs; and the peasantry, to escape serfdom, fled from the centre to the Steppes of the Ukraine.

The Ukraine became a centre of agricultural speculation; the Polish Pans and the gentry rented land from the fugitive peasants and burghers, and populated the country. Small towns, countless villages and farms came into existence; and since the population of this district was in a state of constant warfare with the Tartars, armed societies grew up to defend the frontier. These armed societies were the origin of the Little Russian Cossacks.

"Cossack" is a Tartar word meaning "robber"; and in the sixteenth century hired labourers who had no definite occupation and no permanent home were called Cossacks all over Russia.

Later on, in the kingdom of Moscow, the name was given to mercenary soldiers. In the Steppes a class of armed hunters and fishermen guards arose who were as brave as they were poor, and hunted and fished for the local traders. Since their occupation brought them into constant contact with the Tartars, they received from them the name "Cossack," which was already used to designate the homeless workmen of Northern Russia. The first home of the Cossacks was the frontier line of Russian towns extending from the Middle Volga to Riazan and Toula and turning sharply thence to the south and to the Dnieper.

At the end of the fifteenth century bands of hunters from Kiev and from other towns of the south went into the Steppes to "cossack": namely to trade in fish and game; they grew to be the frontier guards of the country, and their chief source of income was the loot they derived from raids made against the Tartars and the Turks. This sport naturally incensed the latter against the Polish Government.

The Polish Government tried to render their weapon of defence harmless as well as useful, by using the Cossacks as soldiers in war and making them into workmen in peace; but this the Cossacks would not stand, and their discontent led them to establish a centre of their own.

This was called the "Zaporozhia," which means "beyond the waterfalls." When the Cossacks of the towns felt the yoke of the Poles to be intolerable they fled beyond the "Porogi," or waterfalls, to the islands of the Dnieper, where they established an armed camp called the "Setch."[1] It was furnished with small guns, and here a society of armed traders was formed which lived by plunder; where any discontented or adventurous man was received and enrolled without distinction of race or creed. Women were not allowed to live in the camp. The Cossacks had no sense of nationality. They regarded the Crimea, Turkey, Moldavia, and even Moscow as so many sources of plunder. But when the Polish gentry began to make its domination felt in their own country, the Cossacks regarded the Pans and the Poles as their worst enemies. Hitherto they had been willing to fight for anybody; they had offered their services

[1] For a description of Cossack life, see Gogol's *Tar as Bulba* and Sienkiewicz' *With Fire and Sword*.

to the Emperor of Germany against the Turks, to the Poles against Moscow, and to Moscow and the Crimea against the Poles. Suddenly they became the defenders of the orthodox Faith.

The cause of this was the second union, a religious one, which was made twenty-seven years after the political union of Poland and Lithuania. By 1569 Protestantism had died out in Lithuania, and in 1593 the orthodox clergy, largely owing to the vexations which the Church had to undergo at the hands of the newly made Patriarch of Moscow, raised the question of the union to the Eastern and Western Churches.[1] Michael Rahosa, who was Primate of Kiev, tired of having the Greek churches of Russia and Lithuania exploited like a gold-mine by the Metropolitans, the Patriarchs and the Bishops, who demanded money as a compensation for what they had to suffer at the hands of the Turks, summoned the Bishops of the Metropolis to a Council at Brest, and in 1593 the Fathers of the Council declared they would henceforth obey the Pope alone and signed an Act of Union with Rome. The members of the Orthodox Church who were united to Rome were henceforward called Uniats. Uniat is the term which denotes those Russian or Polish Catholics, or, indeed, Catholics of any nationality, who maintain unity with Rome, although the country they belong to is schismatic, and while they are at unity in every point with Rome in matters of faith, they keep their traditional rites and their own canon law. The Russian and Polish Uniats kept the Greek rites and the Greek Liturgy. The orthodox clergy and the citizens who resented this fell back for their defence on the Cossacks and the peasantry. It was represented to the Cossacks that the Church union was an alliance of the Polish King, the Polish Pan, the Priest and the Jew against the Russian god. Consequently, from the beginning of the seventeenth century the Cossacks were drawn into an orthodox-religious opposition to the Poles. In 1625 the orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev (the orthodox clergy had preserved their hierarchy alongside of the Uniat hierarchy) called upon the Cossacks to defend the orthodox citizens of Kiev. And henceforward the aim of the Cossacks was twofold: to defend the Russian people and the Russian creed; and at the same time to drive the Polish gentry out of the Ukraine. This aim was

[1] See *Vicissitudes de l'Eglise Catholique*, Theiner.

realized in the shape of a rising of Cossacks in the middle of the seventeenth century under the leadership of the Cossack commander Zinovi-Bogdan Khmelnitski, who made up his mind to get rid of the Polish yoke. He incited the Khan of Crimea to attack the Poles and marched into Poland with the Crimeans and the Cossacks. The Poles were twice heavily defeated, and all the Russian districts of Poland rose in revolt. The Cossacks won some victories and obtained a favourable treaty, which, however, had no result. The grievances of the Little Russians remained the same as before, and a continuation of the war against Poland seemed to be impossible. Bogdan Khmelnitski considered that the only way out of the situation was for the Cossacks to become subjects of the Russian Tsar. With this purpose he sent an embassy to the Tsar Alexis, the successor of Michael, begging him to receive Little Russia under his protection and the Little Russians as his subjects.

The Tsar understood very well that this would mean war with Poland, and he tried to settle the matter peacefully. Khmelnitski declared that if the Tsar would not help them, the Little Russians would seek the protection of the Sultan of Turkey. So finally, in 1653, the Tsar decided to accept the Little Russians as his subjects.

His action resulted in two wars with Poland: in the first war the Russians were successful and took Smolensk, and all the more important towns of Lithuania capitulated to him; but the second war, which took place in 1661 (a war with Sweden lasting five years intervened), was less fortunate, and Russia, by a treaty drawn up in 1667, lost all that had been taken in Lithuania, White Russia and Podolia, and retained Severskaia (the northern portion of the Government of Chernigov), Smolensk, and the part of Little Russia which lay on the left bank of the Dnieper, and with this, the doubtful boon of the Little Russian question, which was to hamper the foreign policy of Russia for many decades.

Thus ended the third round of the long fight between Russia and Poland, which is the main political factor in the history of Russia during the seventeenth century. The remaining chief events of this period are the great schism which took place in the Orthodox Church, brought about by the reforms of Nikon, which I will deal with separately; and the dawn of the influence of

Western Europe, which prepared the way for the reforms of Peter the Great.

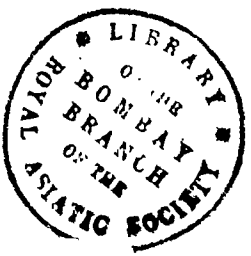
The centralization of the Government and the increased industrialism of the towns led to military and financial improvements in the administration, and to economic progress, such as the building of merchant fleets and development of industry. Foreign officers, soldiers, doctors, artisans, merchants, and traders flocked to Moscow in answer to the increasing demand. The German suburb in Moscow was the centre of European culture in Moscow. The officers, capitalists, and artisans brought with them, together with their technical skill, the comforts of Western Europe.

At the Court the Tsar developed a taste for theatrical spectacles, and a theatrical company was organized under the direction of Gotfried Gregory, the Lutheran parson of the German quarter.

In 1672, on the occasion of the birth of the Tsarevitch, the Tsar Alexis ordered him to write a play. A theatre was built in the village of Preobrezhensk, near Moscow. A play on the subject of Esther and Ahasuerus was produced here by Gregory, and others about Judith, Joseph, Adam and Eve representing Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained; the plays were not religious mysteries, but translations from the German, full of action and leavened by a comic element. In 1673 Gregory had formed a company consisting of twenty-six young men. The first original play written in Russia was *The Prodigal Son*, by Simeon Polotski, who was the tutor of the Tsar's children. In 1674 the ballet was introduced. It was Poland which first brought the culture of Western Europe into Russia; and the superior culture of Poland was a weapon in the struggle between the two races which necessarily forced itself on the attention of Russia. The necessity of founding schools began to be clear. In 1665 a special building was made in the Monastery of the Saviour at Moscow, which was not a regular school, but where Latin was taught by Simeon Polotski.

But the introduction of Western culture did not meet with universal favour. Even at this time, as has always happened in Russian history, a section of the population resented Western innovations and looked upon them as dangerous and unprofitable. In some of their sermons the clergy preached resistance to the modern innovations and the imitation of the West.

In spite of this, the epoch was one of gradual progress and of slow intellectual emancipation from the blind conservatism and exclusiveness of the past. It created an atmosphere favourable to the formidable revolution which was to be brought about by Peter the Great. Progress was in the air; the movement was ready for a great man to appear and to carry out the work of reform which the atmosphere of the epoch seemed to indicate. The reformer appeared, but the manner and character of his action must have exceeded the most fantastic expectations.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CHAPTER XIII

PETER THE GREAT: HIS CHARACTER AND HIS LIFE

THE Tsar Alexis, who died in 1676, was twice married and left behind him a large family. By his first wife, Maria Miloslavski, he had two sickly sons, Feodor and Ivan, and several daughters; by his second wife, Natalie Nariskin, one son, Peter, who was born on 30th May, 1672, and was therefore four years old at his father's death.

Alexis was succeeded by his eldest son Feodor, during whose reign (it lasted only six years) Russia, after a war with Turkey, obtained the Western Ukraine (the right bank of the Dnieper); and the institution of the *Mestnistchestvo* and the books of pedigree (*Rozriadnia knigi*), which I have described in chapter IX., were abolished. The quarrels between the aristocratic officers in times of war on questions of pedigree and precedence had led to battles being lost, and the books of pedigree were now burnt.

The Tsar Feodor died in 1682, without issue. Ivan, the next in succession, was not only an invalid, but feeble in mind, and Peter, who was ten years old, was proclaimed Tsar on 27th April. But Sofia, one of the daughters of Alexis by his first wife, an energetic and ambitious woman, placed herself at the head of a revolt of the Strieltsi (so called from *striela*, an arrow), who were the prætorian guard or the Janizaries of Russia, in favour of her brother. In May, 1682, a *coup d'état* was carried out, in which many of the Empress Natalie's relations were killed. The result of the revolt was that Sofia's brother Ivan was to be Tsar as well as Peter, and that Sofia was to govern in the name of her brothers. This double rule under the regency of Sofia (nothing of the kind had hitherto been seen in Russia) lasted seven years, until Peter was seventeen years old. He took the first oppor-

tunity of establishing his independence and breaking with his half-sister, who, after a short struggle, was obliged to give way to him, and retire for the rest of her life to a convent. From 1689 onwards Peter took the reins of government in his hands, and his half-brother Ivan was Tsar in name only until he died. The landmarks of Peter's life are as follows :—

During the first three years of his reign he set about the realization of the earliest of his ambitious dreams : to build a fleet and to reorganize the army. During these three years he travelled twice to Archangel, built wharfs there, and began the construction of large ships, interrupting his labours in this field to drill the few regular regiments which had been formed according to his wishes.

In 1695 he declared war on the Turks ;[1] in 1696 Azov was taken, and Peter had learnt that his army was in need of a complete reorganization. He perceived that in order to bring this about radical changes would have to be made in the State itself, and that in order to bring Russia up to the level of Europe he would have to forge a link between Russia and Europe. The building of a fleet was a means to this end, and Peter resolved to go to Europe and to learn ship-building himself. He spent the years 1697–8 in Europe, incognito : in North Germany, Holland, England, and Vienna. He was recalled to Russia by an outbreak of the Strieltsi ; he returned and annihilated these Janizaries once and for all. He then set about to create a seaboard for Russia, and with it a link with Europe. In 1700 he declared war on Sweden, and was defeated at Narva.

In 1701 he attacked the Swedes in Livonia ; in 1703 the shores of the Neva were in his hands, and he founded St. Petersburg and Cronstadt.

In 1706 Charles XII, the King of Sweden, invaded Russia and marched into the Ukraine. Peter defeated the Swedish

[1] The best histories of Peter the Great and his reign are in Russian :—*History of Peter the Great's Reign*, by Ustrialov. 5 vols. St. Petersburg, 1851. *History of Russia*, by Soloviev, Vol. XIV, chap. II., and Vol. XVIII, chap. III. (published in 1868). Kluchevski's *Course of Russian History*, Vol. IV. *Peter der Grosse*. A. Brückner, Berlin. Professor Morfill, *A History of Russia*. Methuen, 1902. For the student the most interesting documents are Peter the Great's collected writings and speeches : *Pisma i Bumagi Imperatora, Petra Velikavo*. St. Petersburg, 1900. Contemporary French and English memoirs are also of great interest, especially those of Peter Henry Bruce (the authenticity of these has been doubted, but I do not know on what grounds). Stählin's *Anecdotes of Peter the Great*. Moscow, 1830.

general, Löwenhaupt, at the village of Liesnoe (not far from Bobruisk), in 1708, and on July 7, 1709, he won the decisive battle of Poltava—one of the decisive battles of the world. Shortly after this, in 1710, Turkey declared war on Peter, which ended disadvantageously (and almost disastrously) for Russia in 1711, and Azov was surrendered to the Turks.

He continued to fight the Swedes both on land and on sea, and in 1714 he was master of nearly the whole of Finland. On August 30, 1721, the long struggle with Sweden, which had lasted more than twenty years, came to an end, and the celebrated treaty of Nystadt was signed; Peter assumed the title of Imperator, and on January 23, 1725, he died.

If any one, who was totally unacquainted with Russian history, were to read this short summary he would say: "Peter the Great was a Russian monarch who fought the Swedes and ultimately defeated them, and who fought the Turks and was ultimately defeated by them; he lived until he was fifty-three years old and then died." Such a summary of Peter's work would, however, be incomplete, in that it would leave it out altogether.

A contemporary woman once said about Peter that he was a very good and a very bad man. The criticism is probably just and could afford food for infinite discussion. But however good or however bad we may consider him, there is no doubt about one thing: he was a very great man. Even those historians who seek to belittle the significance of his work, and even those partisans whose political principles lead them not only to deprecate, but to distort it, admit that the task achieved —whether easy or difficult, whether baleful or beneficent—was a gigantic one; that the man who did it was a giant. The theory that Peter was a savage barbarian, an irresponsible tyrant, sick in body and unbalanced in mind, the sport of circumstance, or that he diverted Russia from its natural course and sowed the seeds of disaster, will not resist even a minimum of impartial investigation and honest research. That Russia would have worked out her own salvation without Peter the Great is neither here nor there. The whole significance of Peter the Great's achievement lies in the fact, not that he turned Russia from its earlier direction, not that he set before the Russian people a strange ideal and an alien purpose, but that he helped the country along the path it had instinctively been making for itself, from

the earliest beginnings of its history; that by the strength and vitality of his genius he helped the country at a critical moment to take the right and proper steps to fulfil its own destiny.

Russia, owing to the Tartar invasion, was three hundred years behindhand. It needed all the insuperable energy and creative power of Peter the Great to make it regain its proper place and rank among the European nations. Russia had got used to wearing a superficial but none the less ponderous and hampering garment of Orientalism; the people were stiff with a stale crust of alien tradition. Peter the Great tore the garment to shreds and broke the crust with a hammer.

His whole task consisted in scratching away the Tartar and setting the inner Russian free. His genius was so great, his personality so strong, that the way he did this has the semblance of an earthquake. But he was not like a man who cuts down a wood in order to make a lake, but like a man who tears down weeds and creepers and hews down obnoxious trees in order that the wood may continue to live. He did not change the nature of Russia, but he found the country lagging behind on its way, encumbered with antiquated weapons and laden with useless baggage; he supplied new weapons, serviceable clothes, and useful baggage, and then by a prodigious wrench he dragged the loiterer along at a headlong pace until some of the rival travellers were caught up. He could not in a moment repair the whole damage that had been done in the past, and make up for the misfortunes the traveller had already undergone, but he at least made certain that the object of the journey should not be forgotten; that the traveller should not sink by the wayside and be trampled upon by others; and that as far as its place in the universal race was concerned, Russia should not be behind its rivals, and, so far from going under in the struggle, should be fit to compete with them in the present, to vie with them in the future, and to jostle for the prominent place which had originally been appointed to it, and to keep it. That the traveller was painfully out of breath from the process and resented it does not matter. Lingering by the wayside might have meant death at the hands of a tramp.

Emerson says that Napoleon enlarged the meaning of the word business. Peter the Great enlarged our conception of

the word energy. He had developed to its very fullest extent the quality of frantic energy, which I have said is sometimes characteristic of the Russian. Only there is this difference which we have already noted, that the Russian is generally more capable of a short spurt of frantic energy than of a prolonged, sustained effort. Peter the Great's energy was not only superhuman, but constant. Energy was his normal state.

In April, 1689, when he was seventeen years old, he wrote to his mother as follows from the Pereiaslav Lake :—

"Your little boy, Petrushka, still at work. I ask for your blessing and wish to hear how you are. Thanks to your prayers, we are quite well; and the lake thawed on the 20th of this month, and all the vessels except the big ships are ready."

This phrase "still at work" was the watchword of his whole life. From his earliest youth he was always making things with his hands. In Holland and in England he learnt how to build ships, not as an interested amateur, but as a sweating professional. He once at Moscow earned a pair of boots by working at a smithy with hammer and anvil. His hands were horny and covered with corns and blisters. His impetuous soul was housed in the body of a giant. He was nearly seven feet high. Constant exercise with axe and hammer developed his muscles, which were powerful by nature. He could crumple a silver plate with his hands as though it were paper. He could spend the night in drinking pots of the strongest brandy (mixed with pepper) and rise at cockcrow next morning, fit and fresh for the day's work. It was impossible for him to look on: he had always to be doing something. He had an insatiable thirst for knowing how a thing is done; and it was not only to constant habit of observation, investigation, and inquiry, but also to a natural rapidity of apprehension, to which his lightning-like grasp and assimilation of a new subject, his mastery of the working of a new machine, craft, or handiwork was due. During his first stay abroad German princesses concluded from his conversation that he was the master of fourteen crafts; he was anything by turn and everything for long: a skilful carpenter, a competent tanner, a tremendous blacksmith, a master both of seamanship and of navigation, a daring surgeon, and a drastic dentist (much to the apprehension of his friends if

they suffered toothache). But his favourite occupation was ship-building; and even when he was advanced in age he never let a day go by, when he was in St. Petersburg, without spending two hours or so at the Admiralty. His contemporaries considered him the most skilled, practical ship-builder in Russia. There was not a single detail in the making of a ship which he could not accomplish by himself. The Swedish Ambassador mentions a yacht he had made entirely with his own hands. In Archangel he learnt all there is to be known in navigation and seamanship. When a boy, instead of playing with tin soldiers, he played at war with a regiment of "boy scouts," trained by the best foreign officers in Moscow (the so-called *Potieshnie*, a game not entirely devoid of danger, for hand-grenades were sometimes used, and on one occasion he was wounded in the face by the explosion of a *feuertof*). He went through all the military grades himself, beginning with that of a drummer-boy. The regiments of his childhood, as he grew up, were transformed into regular troops, and formed the nucleus of his new army.

It was as a boy also that he established his first ties with Western Europe, by frequenting the German suburb of Moscow. A whole book might be written about his dealings with foreigners. His introduction of the foreign element, if one of the causes of his progress, was at the same time one of the elements of the unpopularity of his reforms.

"I know," he writes on one occasion, "that the advantages I seem to confer on foreigners do not please my subjects, but I have two kinds of subjects: the sensible and well-principled, who see the truth: that I receive foreigners in order that they should like to remain among us, that we may learn from them and imitate their sciences and their arts, and consequently contribute towards the welfare of the country and the palpable advantages of my subjects. I have also thoughtless and evil subjects who do not understand my designs, and not considering them to be profitable, prefer to remain in their former ignorance and despise all that is good; they would gladly impede anything they think new, out of stupidity, if they could. These people do not consider the state of things in our country before I visited foreign countries and drew foreigners to Russia; and how little success I would have had without their help, in the face of the strength of my enemies."

How accurate, subtle, and acute—as applicable to-day as it was then—was his judgment of various nationalities, can be seen from the following quotation :—

"One can always give higher wages to a Frenchman, because he is a *bon-vivant* and he will spend everything he earns here; to a German you should give no less, because he likes eating and drinking, and little of what he earns will remain; to an Englishman you ought to give still more; he is determined to live well, even if he has to supplement his wages from his own pocket; but to a Dutchman you should give less, because he does not even eat his fill, so as to save money; and to an Italian still less again, because they are generally unexacting and money will never leave their hands. Yes, they do not attempt to conceal the fact, that they only serve in a foreign country and live cheaply so as to earn money, to spend it afterwards in their paradise, Italy, where there is a lack of money."

In spite of his muscular strength Peter the Great was not constitutionally strong. Whether from the result of epilepsy and of his excesses, or the shock he received in his childhood, when he witnessed the revolt of the Strieltsi, or from both, he was subject to fits, and from his twentieth year onward suffered from a nervous disorder which made his head shake, and which gave his features in moments of excitement or anger an ugly contraction. He used to swing his arms as he walked (not unlike Dr. Johnson). Otherwise his face—and the two famous portraits of Peter the Great (Sir Godfrey Kneller's, painted in England in 1693, and Karl Moor's, painted in Paris in 1717) are the index of his character—with its round and penetrating eyes, waving hair, and frank smile (a face expressive of energy, power, swiftness of understanding, cheerfulness, spirit, fire) is sympathetic and genial, and by genial I mean full of genius. In reading Peter the Great's innumerable letters one is aware of an indescribable gusto, of a kind of Shakespearean amiability and sunniness. Brücker, the historian, talks of his *nimmer rastende geist* (his never-resting spirit), and of *die ungemein liebenswürdige, einem bedeutenden masse von gemüthlichkeit zugängliche natur*. He was, like Shakespeare's Henry V, "as full of spirit as the month of May," and he witched the world not only with noble horsemanship, but with noble seamanship, noble warfare, and noble

statesmanship. He had the gaiety of the singing workman, the "soul's joy" that lies in doing; the cheerfulness of Hans Sachs at his lathe, of Siegfried forging Notung, the great sword that was to kill Fafner; and, like Siegfried, he could cut a cloth in the air. It is not extravagant to mention him in the same breath as the heroes of the Saga.

"Peter," says Soloviev (*History of Russia*, Vol. XIV, chap. II.), "is the last and the greatest *hero*. Only Christianity and proximity to our own time have saved us (and not altogether saved us) from religious idolatry of this demi-god and from a mythical representation of the deeds of this Hercules."

He was scarcely ever at home. His home was an inn. He travelled during the whole of his reign throughout the length and breadth of Russia: from Archangel and the Neva to the Pruth, Azov, and Astrakhan. He would get up at four in the summer and at five in the winter; he dined at twelve, and only with his own family; at one he would always sleep for an hour (whether in his own home or in that of friends). He liked breadth and space, fresh air, the breeze of the sea; and, curiously enough, as though the soul of some Viking dwelt in him, he was amorous of the immense sea and of a small cabin; he disliked large rooms and high ceilings, and if he inhabited a large house he had a small room with a low ceiling made in it. He not only, as has been said, made and opened a window in Russia on to Europe, but, like another Ulysses, he let loose the winds of heaven into a dusty space and blew away the cobwebs and the dust of ages. His appetite was insatiable; he could always eat at any time and everywhere, but he ate little at a time; he was a desperately hard drinker, and remained so until his death. In his drinking bouts he sometimes displayed a good-natured fun, a Falstaffian humour, and sometimes an intolerable coarseness. But he knew when not to drink, as in the Persian campaign, and in his military code any misdemeanour or civil offence committed under the influence of drink was punished doubly. Peter the Great was simple, sensual, and impassioned, above all things practical, intolerant of the unessential, and he looked on facts like a lover—he was the greatest of the Russian realists. He loathed pomp and ceremony, ritual, etiquette, fuss, and fine clothes, "buttoning and unbuttoning," bowing and scraping.

When he visited Frederick I of Prussia he was received by the

King on the morrow of his arrival at nine o'clock, and six of the King of Prussia's best carriages were sent to fetch him. The carriages waited till noon outside his door, when they learnt that Peter had already gone out at eleven o'clock by the back door and walked to the palace on foot with some Russian gentlemen who were studying at Berlin. The King asked Peter, in astonishment, if he had really walked on foot. And Peter, thanking him for his preparations, said: "I asked that no ceremonies should be prepared for me because I am not accustomed to them, and I did not wish to be conspicuous in the town; I am accustomed to walking, and in one day I often walk fifty times more than I did to-day."[1]

He made short work of the ponderous, complicated court ceremonial, which existed on his accession to the throne at the Court of Moscow. There the Tsars had lived more like clockwork-figures or gilded idols, in long, stiffly embroidered dressing-gowns, than like human beings. To finger gems, to assist at the services of the church, had been their principal distraction; hunting and falconry their only diversion; and the ceremony with which they were surrounded had an almost Chinese complication. Peter the Great reformed this altogether. He "lost his face" in the Chinese sense once and for all. He could not endure formality of any kind. His whole life long he aimed at living as cheaply and as simply as possible. His wife and his sister used to darn his socks, and his boots would be resoled again and again. In the morning he would wear a dressing-gown of Chinese nankin, and when he went out, a thick, long jacket of cloth, which he disliked changing often. He drove about in a one-horse cabriolet, and sometimes with a pair of horses which any Moscow merchant would have despised. For state occasions he would borrow a carriage from one of the Senators. He disliked liveries, and he was served by a small number of orderlies; he had no chamberlains or lords-in-waiting. And the expenses of the Court, which under the former Tsar had amounted to hundreds of thousands of roubles, did not exceed six thousand pounds a year.

He was as simple in his manners, and in his dealings with men, as he was in his habits. When he was a guest at a friend's house, he used to sit down anywhere where he saw a chair vacant.

[1] Stählin, *Anecdotes of Peter the Great*, p. 193. Moscow, 1830.

His table manners left something to be desired in refinement. He liked eating with his fingers, and found knives and forks irksome. At his own entertainments there were separate rooms: one for the Tsarina and the ladies, one for the officers of the army, one for the officers of the navy, one for the merchants, and one for the ship-builders and foreign shippers. He would sit with the sailors and play chess and drink beer with them, and treat them and be treated by them with the utmost familiarity.

He was a cheerful guest, an amiable host; he liked talking; he could not endure quarrels or arguments that disturbed the harmony of the evening; he punished people who broke the peace in this way by making them drink three goblets of wine, each at a go.

Just as in the business of life he hated pomp, so in his recreations a gross buffoonery was what appealed to him. "Er liebte das naiv kindliche, das Roh-Burleske," says Brückner. In the feasts which he himself planned and determined, down to the smallest details, the buffoonery sometimes reached an incredible degree of grossness. That is not, however, the most curious point of these festivities; for it is easy enough to point to orgies of the same kind in the courts of Henry III of France, James I of England, Augustus of Saxony, and Frederick William I of Brandenburg; and the Memoirs of the Margravine of Bayreuth, Frederick the Great's sister, reveal to us the essential coarseness of the court amusements in the Europe of the eighteenth century. The curious thing is not so much the grossness and coarseness of the sport, as the thoroughness with which Peter the Great planned every detail of his orgies. At times when they took the form of travesties of religious ceremonies, in which a mock Pope was lord of the unseemly revels, they had a revoltingly blasphemous character. But his genius stamped his very orgies with a wild and whirling fantasy; and since in every respect his temperament was one which broke the bonds of the normal, and overleapt all prescribed limits, the buffoonery which accompanied his orgies was more extravagant than that of other men, just as his brain was swifter, his capacity for work greater; in fact, the extravagance of his orgies was the overflow and surplus of his exuberant genius.

It must not be thought that, because the feasts of Peter the

Great sometimes had a sacrilegious character, he was irreligious. So far from this being the case, he expressed throughout his life a deeply rooted faith in God, which strengthened him in his moments of doubt and discouragement. Here are some of his sayings on religion :—

" The man who does not believe in God is either a madman or without understanding. He should recognize the existence of the Creator by His works."

Here is his opinion of atheists and free-thinkers :—

" They consider themselves to be cleverer than other men, and they do not even understand that all that they reveal by their daring words is their own dishonesty, their ignorance and their pride : their dishonesty, because they openly despise the word of God, as revealed in the Holy Scripture, on which religion is built ; their ignorance, because they have not sufficient sense and enlightenment to recognize the truth of the Christian religion ; and their pride and haughtiness, because they consider themselves superior, and wish to be honoured more than other men in society, and more than those learned men who definitely prove the truth of the Christian religion in their works ; and they even put themselves higher than whole Councils of the Fathers of the Church, the least and last of which had more understanding and worth than a whole crowd of such unreasoning and insolent preachers of folly and evil, whose principles must inevitably bring disorder and confusion into the commonwealth."

The following is from his Military Laws and Instructions :—

" Those who use an unchristian oath or blasphemy, and, whether sober or under the influence of drink, insult the name of God, or blaspheme, or openly say something insulting against the Holy Name of God, and are caught so doing by two thoroughly trustworthy witnesses, or should the matter be otherwise proved, shall, according to the nature of the case, receive corporal punishment or be put to death."

And finally :—

" God gave kings power over people, but Christ alone is Lord over the conscience of men."

At the same time, although he was fond of gross buffoonery and extravagant coarseness, there was another side to his leisure.

He had a sense of beauty; he was a lover of beautiful things. He spent money and labour in acquiring good pictures and statues from Germany, Italy, and English collectors; he founded the marvellous collection of the Ermitage; his taste in architecture was good: the palaces which he built are there to bear witness of it, especially the Palace of Montplaisir at Peterhof. He had an eye for symmetry and form, and his practical knowledge of many technical crafts lent him an amazing grasp of artistic detail. He appreciated the plastic arts more than all; he admired landscape, pictures, and statues. He brought back a collection of etchings after his first journey in Europe; he was surrounded by first-rate artists. In Amsterdam, he spent a great deal of time in the picture galleries and at picture auctions. During his second journey abroad he also spent much time in the picture galleries, and when he bought pictures he checked his own predilections by the best available advice.

Peter the Great was one of those men whose rest and recreation consist in a change of work; in his leisure hours he would spend his time in turning, in the study and use of mathematical instruments, and in visiting various workshops and studios. He was fond of the sound of bells, brass instruments, and simple stringed instruments; he introduced bands into the army; he liked Polish and Russian music, but could not endure Italian and German music.

He has been charged with cruelty, but the evidence of his contemporaries refutes the idea that he was cruel by nature. It has been said that he civilized Russia *à coups de knout*. There is some truth in this. The punishments of his reign were terribly severe, but they were not inflicted for the pleasure of giving pain, but only as practical measures against an unbridled lawlessness and a deeply rooted spirit of mutiny and anarchy fostered by the troubles of a century of anarchy.

The acts of severity of a great man stand out more clearly, because he is a great man. They are written in brass, and people are inclined to attribute to one individual the customs which were prevalent in a whole continent. Men were whipped and broken on the wheel, robbers were impaled in the reign of Peter the Great, but nobody takes the trouble to reflect what kind of people those robbers were, what kind of things they did (things which make your hair stand on end to read), and what available means to

check them existed; nor what means were taken in other countries against similar crimes at the same epoch. Nothing but the most ruthless and drastic measures had the slightest effect on the criminal class of this epoch. The punishments inflicted by Peter the Great were not severer than those which were customary amongst his contemporaries in other countries of Europe. Breaking on the wheel was everywhere common at that time in Europe. "Russia," says Professor Morfill, "never witnessed anything more atrocious than the execution in 1757 of Damiens at Paris, at that time the most civilized capital in the world." This was the execution which English gentlemen went to witness as though it were the Derby. Charles XII of Sweden wrote out in detail the tortures that the Livonian Patkul was to undergo.

Peter the Great was inexorable and relentless when he had decided to punish a man of whose guilt he was convinced. He took pains to see that punishment, like anything else, should be carried out efficiently. But he never punished for punishment's sake. Like Keate, he was a "just beast"; he was lenient in dealing with faults which he considered either to be venial in themselves or to be affected by the circumstances of the case.

The following anecdote repeated by Peter Miller, a Moscow manufacturer, who was at Tsarskoe Selo the day of the occurrence, to Stählin, who was librarian to the Grand Duke Peter Feodorovich, is characteristic.

In his twenty-fifth year Peter the Great was lying seriously ill with fever. When all hope had been abandoned, and the prayers for the dying were being said for him, Peter was informed that the Criminal Court, according to custom, had come to ask him to pardon nine robbers and murderers who had been condemned to death, and who had prayed God for the recovery of the Tsar.

The Sovereign hearing this had the judge brought to him at once, and ordered him to read out the names of those who were condemned to death and the nature of their crimes. Peter then said to the judge, in halting tones, "Do you really think that if I pardon such evil-doers, and set the law aside, I shall be doing a good action and incline Heaven to save my life, or that God will heed the prayer of such wicked thieves and murderers?

Go, and immediately order that the sentences on these evil-doers be carried out. I still hope that God, even for this just deed, will have mercy upon me, spare my life, and restore my health to me."

The sentence was carried out the next day, and Peter recovered shortly afterwards.

He was subject, as well as to epileptic fits, to electric spasms of temper which passed over quickly, but which led him, in the heat of the moment, to act in a hasty and violent manner which he regretted afterwards. On one occasion, having boxed a boy's ears for making a noise, and finding out afterwards that the boy had been innocent, he said, "Never mind, the next time you do something wrong you won't be punished." The next time occurred very soon afterwards.

But in spite of his severity in executing justice, and his explosive and sometimes terrifically violent temper, to say that he was a cruel man, cruel in cold blood and for the sake of cruelty, delighting in torment and gloating over pain, would be the contrary of the truth and impossible to substantiate by evidence.

In Paris, when he was witnessing an operation being performed on a man's eye, when the knife was applied he looked away; when he took the town of Warsaw he wounded some of his troops with his own hands, in order to put a stop to the pillage and the slaughter. He forgave freely and often; in fact, Tolstoi's poem, which I quoted in chapter IV., fits him exactly in every detail. There are many stories of his clemency, his good nature, and his leniency. He was passionately fond of animals, especially of dogs and birds; he once let off a criminal whose pardon the Empress had craved in vain, because he found a petition for his enemy tied to his dog's collar. (The Empress thought of this device.) He hated sport: "He could not bear," says Stählin, "hunting, and, in general, every other means of tormenting animals." He was afraid of blackbeetles.

He is himself credited with the saying that a cruel man cannot be a hero, and he was no exception to his own rule. In short, he was naturally a humane man, with a fund of kindness, an explosive and violent temper, relentless in crushing opposition, inexorable in the execution of justice and in the punishment of criminals, when he was satisfied of their guilt; lenient towards those whom he considered to deserve leniency; and in each of these

qualities he was capable at any moment of exceeding all conceivable limit. This is what he himself says on the subject :—

"I know that they say I am a cruel man and a tormentor, but fortunately, however, it is only those foreigners who say this, who are ignorant of the circumstances under which I worked for many years, and they do not know how many of my subjects hindered me in the most terrible wise, in the greatest of my designs for the welfare of my country, and forced me to deal with them with the utmost rigour, but not out of cruelty, and still less because I was a tormentor."

And again :—

"I know that they consider me a severe monarch and a tyrant. They are mistaken. They do not know the circumstances. God sees my heart and my conscience, and knows how near to my heart my subjects are, and how greatly I desire the welfare of my country. Ignorance, obstinacy, hypocrisy, were everywhere up in arms against me, from the very moment when I showed the design of bringing welfare to the State and reforming its savage customs. They are the tyrants, not I. I have raised up the honest, industrious, and hard-working sons of my country, and rewarded them, and I have dealt with those who are disobedient and harmful according to necessity. Let slander do its worst, my conscience is clear. God shall be my judge! Untruthful report in the world is like the whirlwind that passeth."

We will check this statement by the evidence of his contemporaries. Nartov writes about him as follows :—

"If a philosopher were ever to investigate his secret archives, he would tremble with horror to see what was planned against this monarch. We, who were the servants of the monarch, sigh and shed tears when we sometimes hear him reproached for a cruelty which was not in him. If all knew what he had to put up with, and with what afflictions he was stricken, they would be horror-stricken ; likewise, if they could see how tolerant he was of mortal weakness, and how often he forgave when forgiveness was undeserved ; and although Peter the Great is with us no more, yet his spirit still dwells in our souls, and we who had the good fortune to dwell by the side of this monarch shall die true to him, and our vital love for him, our God upon earth, shall last until it is buried with us in the tomb. We shall fearlessly speak of our father, so that men may learn truth and courage from his noble example."

Another of his contemporaries, Nepliuev (the Emperor's representative in Constantinople), writes the following:—

"In February, 1725, I received the grievous news that the father of his country, Peter, the first Emperor, had departed from this world. I drenched the paper which brought the news with my tears; both on account of the duty I owed to my Sovereign and of his manifold kindness to me; verily, verily, I do not lie. I was for more than twenty-four hours without consciousness. Had it been otherwise, it would have been sinful: this monarch brought up our country to a level with other nations; he taught people to recognize that we were men; in a word, whatever you may look at in Russia owes its origin to him, and whatever shall be accomplished in the future will proceed from the same source. And beyond and above what I have just written, to me, personally, the Sovereign was a kind father. May God let the soul of him who laboured so hard for the commonweal rank among the first."

Stählin remarks that with relentless severity in the fulfilment of justice he combined a large dose of charity.

"There was no crime he would not forgive, if the culprit showed true repentance. In such circumstances he usually said: 'God will forgive thee'; but it was necessary for the repentance to precede the accusation or the evidence of justice, because in that case he considered repentance to be the child of necessity. But a man who committed an act of thoughtlessness, or owing to unfortunate circumstance, always found in him a father like that one in the Gospels who received the prodigal son; . . . in doubtful circumstances he endeavoured to defend the accused, saying in such circumstances that it was better to forgive ten guilty men than to condemn one innocent man."

Peter the Great was a self-made man and a self-taught man. He bitterly regretted the imperfection of his early education. His copy-books, which contain his elementary exercises in arithmetic, still exist, and they show to us not only that he spelt abominably, but that his teacher was not a very much better arithmetician than he was himself. He spent his whole life in learning.

When the Peace of Nystadt was signed, he wrote to Apraxin: "Schoolboys as a rule finish their studies in seven years; our schooltime has lasted three times as long (twenty-seven years), but it has ended so well that it couldn't be better."

The way to learn to be a carpenter, says Aristotle, is to do carpenter's work. Peter the Great realized this as a child. He learnt to be a soldier by learning first to be a drummer-boy. He learnt to be a sailor by running up the rigging. He learnt to build a navy by hammering in the docks. He learnt to make an army by going to war; by going to war, he learnt what was necessary and wanting in the civil organization of the country in times of peace. He learnt and worked all at once and everywhere. But he had one tremendous handicap: he was alone; and in spite of the devotion of those who immediately surrounded him, he was isolated. The majority of his subjects neither understood his aims nor sympathized with them; the popular feeling was against them. Like nearly all great men, he had an infallible eye for men; he chose his servants and his instruments with a swift intuition, and these served him with a warm devotion; but the demands he made on their services were unlimited. He regarded himself as the first servant of the State, and he spared neither the sweat of his brow nor the blood of his veins. He did his utmost and gave his best, untiringly, unceasingly, and he expected every one else to do the same. He was uncompromising in his expectation that every one should do his duty, and he was unsparing of human life in fulfilment of a purpose. This is true. But if he was exacting in his tax on the energy of his servants, reckless in his expenditure of human life and ruthlessly severe towards shirkers, idlers, and those whom he regarded as the enemies of his country, it must be remembered that he loved those who served him well, and he won their love. He could not have accomplished his work without the aid of collaborators; and he was constantly searching for capable servants. He had, as I have just said, the eye of genius for detecting them, and he encouraged them to be on the perpetual look-out for capable sub-collaborators. To those whose services he had proved, whom he knew to be trustworthy, hard-working and well-meaning, he was extremely lenient if they occasionally lapsed; in fact, he always forgave a fault which the culprit confessed of his own accord, before being forced to do so by being found out. And not only did his trusty servants love him, but his soldiers worshipped him. He knew what to say to soldiers: he had the secret of that direct eloquence which, without phrase or ornament, supplication or threat (a single wrong note will

destroy it), will go straight to the hearts of fighting men and kindle that mysterious flame which takes away the bitterness of hardship, the burden of toil, the tyranny of discipline, and makes a privilege of wounds and a favour of death.

But, apart from his soldiers, the people were against him; they looked on his reforms with suspicion and on his energy with dread. His demonic power was obvious to everybody. The people, therefore, considered that this force, which seemed to be turning Russia upside down and inside out, could not be a power for good, and must proceed from the Prince of Darkness. Many considered him to be the Antichrist. He had against him the accumulated conservatism of Russia. People hated his innovations; they rebelled against the influence of the foreigner; they resented having to shave their beards, to change their mode of dress; and they feared as much as they disliked the all-seeing eye of the Master, which pried into everything, and whose searching investigations resulted in hurry, hustle, and work, and still more work; whose absence was felt like a presence, whose departures were always sudden, and whose return, however much it was expected beforehand, was unexpected when it came about, and terrible. Moreover, all the opposition against Peter, by a tragic irony of circumstance, centred in his own son, who was the opposite of himself: indolent, reflective, passive, pensive, obstinate, inclined to religious mysticism, vicious, and, though not stupid, ineffectual; profoundly conservative, and beloved by the populace. His son Alexis made no secret of his hatred of his father's reforms, and promised to restore the old order of things as soon as he should come to the throne. He organized no actual plot against his father; the part he played was purely passive, but his very existence meant that a centre of opposition was there, and that, if Peter died, Russia might fall back into the rut from which she had been so forcibly dragged at the expense of so much labour, so much life, and so much death. Peter was confronted with a terrible choice: Russia or his son—and he loved his son, this drunken and slovenly Absalom, although he bitterly deprecated his ways. Alexis fled from him, and went abroad, resolving probably to bide his time, but the electric force of his father's will dragged him back from Naples, and then he partially confessed the antagonistic part he had played as regards his father, and what he left unsaid was revealed by others. He was con-

demned to death as a traitor, tried by a tribunal of the highest functionaries; he died in prison, but the manner and circumstances of his death are uncertain.

Peter had to pay for this tragedy, and the perpetual isolation to which he was doomed was the price of his surname "the Great." That he deserved the title no sensible man can doubt. Even those historians who seek to belittle his work are obliged to attack him from the rear; they say the reform was already prepared by his predecessor, that he had only to carry out a plan which had already been drawn up. Many plans have been drawn up by Russian statesmen and rulers for the future welfare of Russia. The difficulty has been to find a man who has the courage to publish them and the capacity to execute them, the strength of will to impose them, in the face of active opposition and passive resistance.

Peter the Great met with every conceivable obstacle: violent, active opposition—the Strieltsi, the Cossacks, the clergy, his own wife and his own son; immemorial prejudice, hatred of the foreigner, hatred of innovation, dislike of work, foreign foes, internal feuds, rivalries, class hatred, secret sedition, religious fanaticism, and above all that obstinacy and that stupidity against which the gods, as Schiller says, fight in vain. He overcame them all.

Morally, physically, and intellectually his nature knew no limits. I have alluded to a quality which is characteristic of intellectual Russians: their speculative audacity, their refusal to recognize a bound or a terminus, their final "Why not?" Peter the Great manifested this quality in the realm of action. There was no straw in Russia, so he made bricks. Russia had no seaboard, so he made a fleet; there was no army, so he went to war; he made a capital on a marsh; he made a Prime Minister out of a baker's boy, an Empress out of a peasant.

To this day you often hear Russian politicians say, "Such and such a thing is impossible in Russia; it is all very well for Western nations, but here it would go against the grain of the people." Peter the Great had no patience with theories or preconceived notions, however plausible and specious. If he considered a thing practically useful it was to him possible. His "Why not?" was followed by practical demonstration. If people said to him that such and such a thing was impossible in Russia,

he started to do it. "Your America is *here and now*," said Carlyle. *Here and now* was Peter the Great's motto. The principle of his life was "to find out what you cannot do and then to go and do it," or rather to find out what he considered practically necessary for the present needs and to get it. Perhaps the best summary of his work is that contained in the speech he made at a banquet after the Peace of Nystadt. I will quote it in full, since it is characteristic of the man :—

"Brethren, who is the man among you who, thirty years ago, could have conceived, even in a dream, the idea of being here, in German clothes, employed with me in ship-building on the Baltic, and in countries wrested by our toil and bravery? Of living to see so many brave and victorious soldiers and seamen springing from Russian blood? Of seeing so many and such sons of ours travelling in foreign countries and coming home so accomplished? Who would have thought we should live to see so many foreign artists and artisans among us, and foreign countries harbouring so high an opinion of myself and ourselves?

"Historians place the ancient seat of all sciences in Greece; when they were being expelled thence by fatality of the times, they spread into Italy, and afterwards dispersed themselves all over Europe; but by the perverseness of our ancestors they were prevented from penetrating any farther than into Poland: the Poles as well as the Germans formerly groped in the same darkness in which we have hitherto lived, but the tireless care of their governors at length opened their eyes, and they made themselves masters of those arts, sciences, and social improvements which Greece formerly boasted of. It is now our turn, if you will seriously second my designs, and add to your obedience the knowledge you acquire of your own free will. I can compare this transmigration of the sciences to nothing better than the circulation of the blood in the human body; and my mind almost forebodes that they will some time or other quit their abodes in Britain, France, and Germany, and come and settle for some centuries among us, and afterwards, perhaps, return to their original home in Greece. In the meantime I earnestly recommend to your practice the Latin saying *Ora et Labora*, and I earnestly hope that you may happen even in your own lifetime to put other civilized nations to the blush, and to raise the glory of the Russian name to the highest pitch."

No better metaphor could be applied to Peter's work than to say that by a vigorous process of rubbing, he not only restored

the circulation of the blood in the body of Russia, but he made it glow in her frozen veins and stagnant arteries, and he wakened to life the stiff and atrophied muscles. His most severe critics must admit this, and indeed they do. With regard to the critics of his work, putting aside those whose judgment is worthless, owing either to political bias or to historical ignorance, the most weighty charge they bring against him and his work is that he was a workman, an artisan rather than a statesman; that he understood the ways and the means rather than the consequences; that he lacked a wide political grasp; that he was an administrator rather than a statesman; that his reforms were the casual result, the side-issues of his activity—the means to a tangible and immediate end, and not the parts of a co-ordinated plan. But if statesmanship consists of the outlook that reaches beyond that of other men, and of the will that is able to take a decisive step, at a given moment, then Peter the Great was a statesman. His work necessarily had the appearance of having been begun anyhow and anywhere, at every end and all at once, without rhyme or reason, without plan or system; this was due to circumstances, to the state of affairs he found in Russia when he came to the throne.

But in all his various activities, and throughout all his chequered career, he never lost sight of one object: the equipment of Russia with weapons, the drilling of Russia to make the people efficient according to the European standard, so that Russia should be able to compete with other nations. His aim was the reunion of Russia with Europe. Six weeks before his death he wrote, under three headings, and in a few lines, the instructions for Behring's journey which resulted in the discovery of the Behring Strait. His aims had always a practical end, and although he never shrank from any difficulty, however great, he never attempted to undertake a task which he considered was for the time being not impossible, but unprofitable. His aim was to bring back Russia into the family of her Aryan brothers and sisters; to give Russia her proper place and rank among European nations. He accomplished it: not because he was a sudden freak of nature, an irresponsible man of genius, working on alien material, and diverting it from its proper use and end, but because he was himself the product of East and West; the incarnation, the full and complete expression of the Russian

nature which, having started from the West, and after having undergone and then outgrown the yoke of the East, was called back to its starting-point, but had not enough energy to follow the call unaided.

Peter the Great is different from the Great Russian peasant in degree—infinitely if you like—but not in *kind*. It would be less correct to say he was a typical Russian than to say that you may meet in individual Russians small particles of Peter the Great.

I have myself met with Russians who had developed in a high degree some one or other of his chief characteristics. I have met with some educated Russians who possessed his lightning-like rapidity of apprehension, of being able to grasp not only the significance, but the material and minute details of something new, whether abstract or concrete. I remember one notable example of an officer who possessed his cheerful and indefatigable capacity for work, for work against odds; his power of making bricks without straw. And I have met with an ex-soldier—a servant—who possessed his prodigious versatility in the mastery of craft; who could mend a watch, a meerschaum pipe, make furniture, fireworks, cook, sing, make a musical instrument, paint scenery for a theatre with the slenderest and most inadequate means.

Peter the Great's qualities and faults, his capacity and his vices, were all Russian in kind; although he was devoid of some peculiarly Russian qualities and the corresponding peculiarly Russian defects. But men in whom the manifold gifts of Peter are combined are the rare apparitions, the isolated stars in the firmament of history. The Russians have a just cause for pride that, in the course of their history, they produced one such man, who belongs, with Hannibal, Alexander, Cæsar and Napoleon, to the small clan of the world's supremely great men. For whether Peter was or was not a great statesman, whether his insight was just or false, his efforts justified, his aims and accomplishments salutary and profitable or harmful and disastrous, there is no doubt about one thing: he was a great man. Were St. Petersburg drowned in the sea, and all his mighty inheritance laid level with the desert and scattered to the winds, and were there no other witnesses to his personality and his power than his own recorded sayings, these would afford sufficient evidence

to open for him the doors of the Valhalla where there are only a few, and those the greatest.

His speeches and sayings have frequently that unmistakable stamp of greatness, that simplicity which is beyond style, that strength which is ignorant of effort, that directness which is above premeditation, which are found only in the sayings and words of very great men. It is a thing as unmistakable as in art the undefinable accent of certain sudden lines of verse, or certain brief phrases of music, where the pathos of Homer, the passion of Dante, or the sorrow of Beethoven is revealed for an instant and gives us a glimpse of their immeasurable greatness. They are those kinds of sayings which in the mouth of a king inspire his subjects to do better than their best, and they have an annihilating effect when they are set by the side of the sayings of other and less fortunate princes, who, having the clothes only and not the heart of kings, manifest a false majesty and counterfeit greatness, and whose hollow sentences, be they never so loud, are like the notes of a tin trumpet. He wrote, when asked to give back Kantimir, whom he had taken prisoner, to the Turks :—

"I cannot break my word which I have pledged, and give up the Prince who trusted himself to me ; rather, I will consent to give to the Turks land stretching as far as Kursk. If I give that up there remains the hope of some day winning it back. We have nothing that is ours save our honour : to surrender that would be to cease to be a king and to abdicate from the business of kings."

There can be no doubt that Peter deserved his title. "He was a great man, good at many things." And when we pass his statue in St. Petersburg, and we think of his history, his purpose, and his achievement, we are silenced at thought of what he started with, at what he did, and at what he dared to leave undone. We reflect that his leap was into light and not into the darkness ; that since the day when, to help the drowning crew of a ship, he jumped into the sea and caught cold and died of this, his last explosion of energy, St. Petersburg, the work of his hands, his concrete dream, has not known a successor to him, and has not yet got over her sharp bereavement, her irreparable loss, but widowed still, and still forlorn, she is harking in vain for the footfall of her master.

"Vedova, sola, e dì e notte chiama :
'Cesare mio, perchè non m'accompagne?'"

CHAPTER XIV

PETER THE GREAT'S REFORMS

AS I have attempted to indicate in the last chapter, the genius of Peter the Great, and the part which it played in the history of Russia, was not an alien factor which diverted Russian history from its natural course. The work of Peter the Great was not an attempt to force fig-trees to grow thistles, but to let the fig-tree attain to its normal proportions, in spite of centuries of bad gardening and rotten manure.

"Peter the Great," says Soloviev (Vol. XVIII, chap. II.), "was the captain of his work and not the creator of it, because it was a national task and it did not belong to Peter alone."

He was not one of those meteoric conquerors who gallop over devastated countries in pursuit of glory, leaving behind them a mingled inheritance of renown, tears, and blood; and it is this very fact which makes him the essential representative of the Russian nation. The Russian nation and the Russian people are not a nation and a people of conquerors: they are a nation and a people of peaceful colonists, of unwarlike agriculturists.

The whole genius of Peter the Great consists in his having grasped the problem which Russia had to face at the time of his reign. This problem consisted in lifting a poor and almost unknown country out of the rut into which it had fallen, by civilizing it. He realized the magnitude of the task when he returned from his first journey in Europe, during which he had had the opportunity of comparing the state of things abroad with the condition of his own country. The magnitude of the task was enough to damp the most ardent energy; but Peter the Great, although he experienced extreme doubt and discouragement, overcame them. He believed in his people, and he was rewarded for his belief in them.

He recognized that, as far as the internal condition of the country was concerned, Russia was far behind other nations, and would have to go through a long and severe process of education; to enable Russia to do this, without putting her in the position of a humble apprentice among the grown-up nations of Europe, his genius enabled him to fling glory into the balance, and to obtain for Russia a *political* position among the other nations which compensated for the inferiority of her internal civilization, and to give the country the means and the possibility of self-education and self-development.

"In order to educate the Russian people," writes Soloviev, "it was necessary to procure foreign instructors, guides who naturally tended to subject their pupils to their influence, and to remain in a superior position to them; but this lessened the capacity of the apprentices whom Peter wanted to make into master workmen as quickly as possible. Peter did not yield to the temptation; he did not adopt the policy of carrying out the task successfully with ready-made instruments, trained foreigners; he wanted his own people, the Russians, to go to school, although the loss incurred might be great and the inconvenience gigantic."

That is why he gave the high appointments to Russians, the lesser places to foreigners. Events proved that his foresight and insight, and belief in the possibilities of his people, were justified, and that his policy was the right one.

The chief characteristic of the reforms of Peter the Great is the manner in which they were carried out *simultaneously*. Peter the Great painted with a large brush; he did not spend time over the finish of this or that detail, but he sketched a whole plan, a huge design. He drew up an immense programme which was to serve for unborn generations, many years ahead. It is still being carried out now, and the work is still very far from completion. This programme was not mere paper-work. It was written on the soil and on the sea: in the canals which joined the rivers, in new institutions, in laws, in the new means of education, in the fostering of science, in the discovery of a new world for Russia. Of course, a great many of his reforms were sketched only in barest outline; for some only the means were prepared. Many items of his programme have still to be carried out now. Some of the Russian rulers, since Peter's death,

have gone back on his programme, but it has always been to the detriment of their country.

Let us now look more nearly at his programme and his design; at what he accomplished and at what he planned for the future.

The severest lesson which Russia had to learn in the school of Peter the Great was that of warfare. It was also in the nature of the case the most necessary, because in order that Russia should be able to educate itself within, security from external foes was indispensable. Thus the first thing which Russia had to obtain was a political situation among other nations; that is why Peter the Great simultaneously set about to educate his people and to fight his foreign enemies. Without the second factor the first was an impossibility. And by going to war he did two things: he transformed or, rather, created an army, and won for Russia a high position in Europe.

Consequently his first reform was military. It was not only the first but the most prolonged of his reforms, and the hardest both for himself and for his people; and it was not only fruitful politically as regards the external situation of Russia, but it affected the whole structure of society, and it exercised a lasting influence on the internal history of Russia.

Before Peter the Great's time the army consisted largely of foreign mercenaries, with a small admixture of Russian militia. Peter recruited his army for the first war against Sweden from the freedmen and the peasants; serfs were allowed to enter military service without the permission of their masters.

The wars themselves, and the wide area of the theatre of his wars, thinned the ranks and rendered the creation of a larger army necessary. Recruits were now taken from all classes of society: from the children of the Boyars, the *arquebusiers* (*Strieltsi*), and from the children of the clergy. In 1703 alone 30,000 men were raised. The army gradually came to be drawn from all classes, and a regular system of periodical and universal recruiting was introduced. Unmarried recruits from the age of fifteen to twenty, married recruits from the age of twenty to thirty, were sent in parties of 500 to 1000 to the nearest towns, where they formed central depots. Here they were drilled, and when new recruits were needed to complete the thinned ranks of old regiments, or to form new regiments, they were taken

from these depots. The first universal conscription took place in 1705, and there was a fresh one every year until 1709.

At the end of Peter's reign, the army amounted to from 196,000 to 212,000 men, 110,000 Cossacks (not counting foreigners). Besides this, he left a fleet of 48 ships, 800 small vessels, with a crew of 30,000 men and 9000 guns. This change in the recruiting of the army had the result of remodelling Russian society on a new and democratic basis—the transformation was really a continuation of the work of Ivan IV, whom Peter the Great said he had taken as his model. In creating his special court, the *Oprichina*, with its special class of State servants, the object of Ivan IV was to create a class of gentry with something of the nature of a police, to counterbalance and to check the hereditary landlords, and especially the Boyars.

This was the origin of the Russian *Dvorianstvo*, or gentry. The Boyars, with the abolition of their complicated "peerage" the *Mestnichestvo*, had ceased to exist, and the remnants of the Boyars were swallowed up by the gentry. The introduction of serfdom gave to the gentry a common interest which bound together the various layers of their society.

Peter the Great, in his legislation, gave the name of *Dvorianstvo*, or nobility, to this class of men of service. Nobles had hitherto been military servants whose duty it was to defend the country from foreign enemies. Moreover, the upper layer of the gentry, which served in the towns, and which had gradually settled at the court of Moscow, was the most important armed force of the country: they had the great mass of capital in their hands; they supplied the Government with instruments; they were at the same time a military, an administrative, and a landowning class. The Government chose from them its personal instruments of administration; the result was that there was no division and distinction between civil and military service.

Peter the Great not only confirmed but increased the obligations of the gentry. They not only had to serve from the age of fifteen, but they had to receive a preliminary training in schools. From the age of fifteen they had to serve in the army, and, before becoming officers, they had to serve a certain number of years as private soldiers. He then separated the military and civil services. He made a rule by which the gentry was to serve proportionately in each branch of the service.

Now the great change in Peter the Great's reforms was this: hitherto the position of a man of service in the kingdom of Moscow had depended (*a*) on his rank, and (*b*) on his personal service, but more on the former than on the latter; that is to say, his services seldom gave a higher position than did his rank.

Peter the Great introduced the democratic idea that service is everything, rank nothing. He had it proclaimed to the whole gentry that any gentleman, in any circumstances whatsoever and to whatever family he belonged, should salute and yield the first place to any officer. The gentleman served as a private soldier and became an officer; but a private soldier who did not belong to the nobility, and who attained the rank of a commissioned officer, became, *ipso facto*, a member of the hereditary nobility. Every noble, by the nature of his class, was to be an officer, and every officer became, *ipso facto*, a noble.

In the civil service he introduced the same democratic system. He divided it into three sections: military, civil, and court. Every section was divided into fourteen ranks, or *Chins;* the attainment of the eighth class conferred the privilege of hereditary nobility, even though those who received it might have been of the humblest origin. He thereby replaced the aristocratic hierarchy of pedigree by a democratic hierarchy of service. Promotion was made solely according to service; lineage counted for nothing. There was no social difference, however wide, which could not be levelled by means of State service. Thus, in abolishing a governing class, based on an aristocracy, Peter the Great created a new governing class which possessed privileges of its own.

The difference between the two classes is that the first was closed and accessible to none. The second was open to all; its privileges could be acquired by any one, whatever his social position. Besides the separation of the civil and military branches of the service, Peter the Great's army reform had a third result. The regiments of the army ceased to be territorial. The change had one far-reaching result on the future history of Russia. The regiments of the guards (which consisted chiefly of the sons of the nobles), freed from all ties of family, place, and relationship, and isolated in St. Petersburg, came to forget that they had anything to do with Moscow, and to consider themselves as guardsmen and nothing else. They soon became the very thing which they had been created to exterminate—

Court Janizaries, a blind weapon in the hands of the Government. By means of the guards Peter the Great exterminated the power of the *Strieltsi*, the *arquebusiers;* but during the first sixteen years after his death these same guards took part in four Court revolutions.

The position of the gentry was affected by another of Peter the Great's reforms, owing to which, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the manor and the "fathers' holding" had practically become one and the same thing. In 1714 Peter issued a ukase, according to which a landowner had not the right of selling or mortgaging his real estate, but was compelled to leave the whole of it to some one of his sons, whichever he preferred; his money and his chattels were to be divided among his other children according to the will of their parents. Peter himself stated in detail the object of this law. It was this. He thought, firstly, that if the land were indivisible, and passed in its entirety from its owner to his heir, the heir would be less likely to oppress his peasant tenants with new taxes, which usually happened when a divided estate was inherited; since the son endeavoured to continue to live on the same scale as the father, and therefore, having less land, increased the taxation. Secondly, the families of the gentry would not fall into decay, as would be the case if the land were partitioned among their descendants. Thirdly, younger sons, who would not enter into the State, unless they were compelled to do so, would, if they possessed no land, be obliged to win their bread (they were released from the obligation of State service) by engaging in trade or in some professional or learned calling. This would, it was hoped, lay the foundations of a middle class.

The point of the law was not that it left property to the eldest son, but that it left the *whole* property to some one person. A father could leave his money and chattels to his younger son if he chose, regardless of the eldest; its whole base and principle was the indivisibility of real estate.

Hitherto we have seen that there existed in Russia, manors: temporary grants of land and "fathers' holdings," permanent and hereditary allotments. The "fathers' holding" was not indivisible, and the manor was not hereditary: neither could be held without service. Peter made his legislation apply to the manor and the "fathers' holding"; the same laws of inherit-

ance applied henceforth to all property held by any landlord and prohibited its alienation. The most important of Peter's reforms proceeded, therefore, from his reorganization of the army, which had the effect of transforming the civil service as well, and of introducing a democratic principle into all branches of the public service.

Besides this, his chief reforms were religious and administrative, his two most important creations: the Holy Synod and the Senate.

I will deal with his religious reforms separately.

The Senate was initiated in 1711. It replaced the old Council of Boyars, the Boiarskaia Duma, the date of whose final disappearance is uncertain. It consisted of nine members, with the option of adding nine should it be necessary. It was created with the object of representing Peter and acting on his behalf during his frequent absences. It was an administrative and not a legislative institution. It was the highest judicial instance, and exercised supreme control. Its functions consisted in supervising all branches of administration, checking the State Budget, and, above all, in seeing that the laws and the Emperor's ukases were carried throughout Russia.

The duties and scope of the Senate were wide, various, and comprehensive, and included the supervision of matters as widely different as the military service of the young nobles, Chinese and Persian trade, and the collection of the tax on salt.

Peter did not attempt to limit or to hamper the powers of the Senate. On the contrary, he referred people over and over again to it, saying that everything was in its hands. In 1718, in a ukase, he said that the "Senate had to work untiringly in the interests of the Monarch and of the State, to do good and to ward off evil."

In 1713 Peter further developed the institution by the creation of the so-called "Collegia"; they consisted of nine Government offices[1]—practically nine Ministries—which shared the conduct of foreign affairs, taxation, the Budget, justice, the army, the Admiralty, commerce, and industry. Each Collegium consisted of a President, a Vice-President, eleven members, four Councillors, four Assessors, and one foreign Councillor or Assessor. Nearly all the Presidents of the Collegia were Russians, and nearly

[1] Afterwards ten.

all the Vice-Presidents foreigners (which is characteristic of Peter).

In the draft, in which the creation of these Collegia was suggested (attributed to Leibnitz), it was said that "as in a watch one wheel is driven by another, so in the watch of the State each Collegium must be worked by the others, and as far as all work together in exact proportion and perfect harmony, the hands of wisdom will mark hours of prosperity for the country."

The Presidents of the Collegia were members of the Senate. Every Collegium was under the supervision of the Senate, but each was independent, and solely and directly responsible to the State in its own circle of business. Each member of a Collegium had to express his own independent opinion, "without regard for persons," and be able to protest against any kind of lawlessness.

The whole country was administratively divided into Governments under the supervision of Governors, and the Governments into Provinces. Every class was given a special organization; a certain educational standard was required for a man to enter service, and since service, either civil or military, was compulsory for the gentry, education became compulsory for them also. All these institutions were, like the Collegia, directly responsible to the Senate. Thus Peter's administrative system was not a hierarchy of interdependent and ascending and descending grades, but a clockwork of connected institutions, collaborating around the Senate, which was the representative of the central power.

With regard to agriculture, Peter did little to change the conditions of the peasant. During his reign serfdom neither increased nor decreased.[1] Somebody once suggested to him that he should liberate the serfs; he is said to have answered that it would be impossible to govern so lawless a people otherwise. Some people think that this was Peter's one great mistake, and arose from a defective grasp of the psychology of the Russian people, which was the cause of his unpopularity. But Brückner says that Peter's opinion with regard to the peasants was shared by Pososhkov, an intelligent merchant of peasant origin, who wrote on the state of affairs in the country. In reading what Pososhkov himself said I was unable to find the statement Brückner alludes to, and the general

[1] His legislation tended in general to stereotype serfdom.

purport of his remarks on the state of Russia seems to point to an opposite conclusion. In any case, it was one of the things Peter dared to leave undone. It is true he severely punished those who were detected in maltreating their serfs: Vasilii Golovin received a sentence of ten years' penal servitude for an offence of this kind (1721). He also made a law (in 1721) by which single members of serf families could not be sold separately. But the most important step he took in this respect was the introduction of a capitation tax.

In the old times the tithed land had been taxed directly. Consequently both the landlords and the peasants tried to limit the area of their land which was subject to taxation, and consequently, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, agriculture deteriorated. In the seventeenth century the new dynasty, in order to put a stop to this, relieved the land from tithes and transferred the tax to the farms. The peasants met the charge by crowding as many people as possible into one farm, without extending the area of their farming, and by amalgamating several houses into one farm, which had one door and was therefore taxed as one farm. This did not improve agriculture, but it decreased the revenues.

Peter introduced a capitation tax. He put a tax on every male serf, for which his owner was responsible. He taxed labour. There was therefore no more incitement to the peasant to diminish the area of land which he farmed, because the proportion of the tax no longer depended on the quantity of land that was farmed, and a peasant paid the same tax per head whether he ploughed five acres or ten acres. Labour was thereby restored to the soil. In consequence of this, the land in the eighteenth century was better farmed than it had ever been cultivated before.

But the most lasting service Peter rendered to his country, in matters connected with the soil, was the system of canals by which the Neva was united to the Volga, and the Volga to the Caspian. This had an incalculable result on the industrial future of Russia, and Peter, in accomplishing this work, was ahead of his times. The Canal du Midi was made in France during the last years of Mazarin's Ministry.

Peter the Great's industrial policy revealed the same energy as the rest of his undertakings. He gave protection to the

merchant class and divided them into guilds. He started the development of mineral industries—iron, coal, and naphtha; special privileges were granted to collective commercial enterprises, and two hundred and fifty manufactories were opened in a few years.

Besides the elementary schools which I have mentioned, there were in Moscow schools of a more advanced character, small as yet, and as yet comparatively elementary, in which Greek and Latin, French and mathematics were taught. He also founded special technical schools, a medical school attached to the Moscow hospital, a school of navigation in St. Petersburg, a naval academy and an engineering school, and he planned a Literary Academy. Lastly, he introduced a drastic change in the dress of the people; he did away with all Oriental appendages, and forced the men to shave off their beards. This may seem to some people childish; it was, however, both significative and statesmanlike.

Whatever opinion may be held as to Peter's genius, and whether his work was beneficent or not, two things stand out clearly: he placed Russia in the same rank with the other nations of Europe; he sketched the outlines of a gigantic programme, in which one of the chief items he accomplished was the democratization of the public service. In so doing he was not introducing an alien system into Russia. From the earliest times, as we have seen, men of service existed in Russia. In making this State service as democratic as possible, Peter was carrying on the work of Ivan the Terrible. In the course of time the governing class developed abuses of the same kind as were generated from the class it replaced; and to redress these abuses, as well as to carry out the items of his programme which have not yet been executed, the chief thing that is needed is another Peter the Great.

CHAPTER XV

THE EPOCH OF CATHERINE II

AFTER the death of Peter the Great, the next factor of importance in the evolution of the Russian people, its history and its institutions, is the reign of Catherine II. The whole history of Russia during the eighteenth century is concentrated in her personality and in her work.

Between the death of Peter the Great in 1725, and the accession of Catherine in 1762, there was a troubled interlude of court revolutions caused by the singular situation of the guard regiments in St. Petersburg, the absence of any definite law with regard to the succession to the throne, and the complicated state of the Imperial pedigree at this time. Peter died without having made a definite law with regard to the successor to the throne in the future. But he had settled before his death that his widow should succeed him, and after her, the son of the Tsarevitch Alexis and his heirs; in default of heirs, his sister Natalie, and in default, his sister Anne. On his deathbed he wrote: "Give everything to——" and here Death took the pen from his hand. At his death two branches of the Imperial family were extant. He was succeeded by his widow Catherine, who reigned for three years, and who nominated as her successor Peter's grandson, Peter, the son of the Tsarevitch Alexis, and in default of Peter and his issue, her two daughters, Elizabeth and Anne. Peter II reigned for two years. This is simple, but when Peter II died, in 1730, these were the possible heirs to the throne;

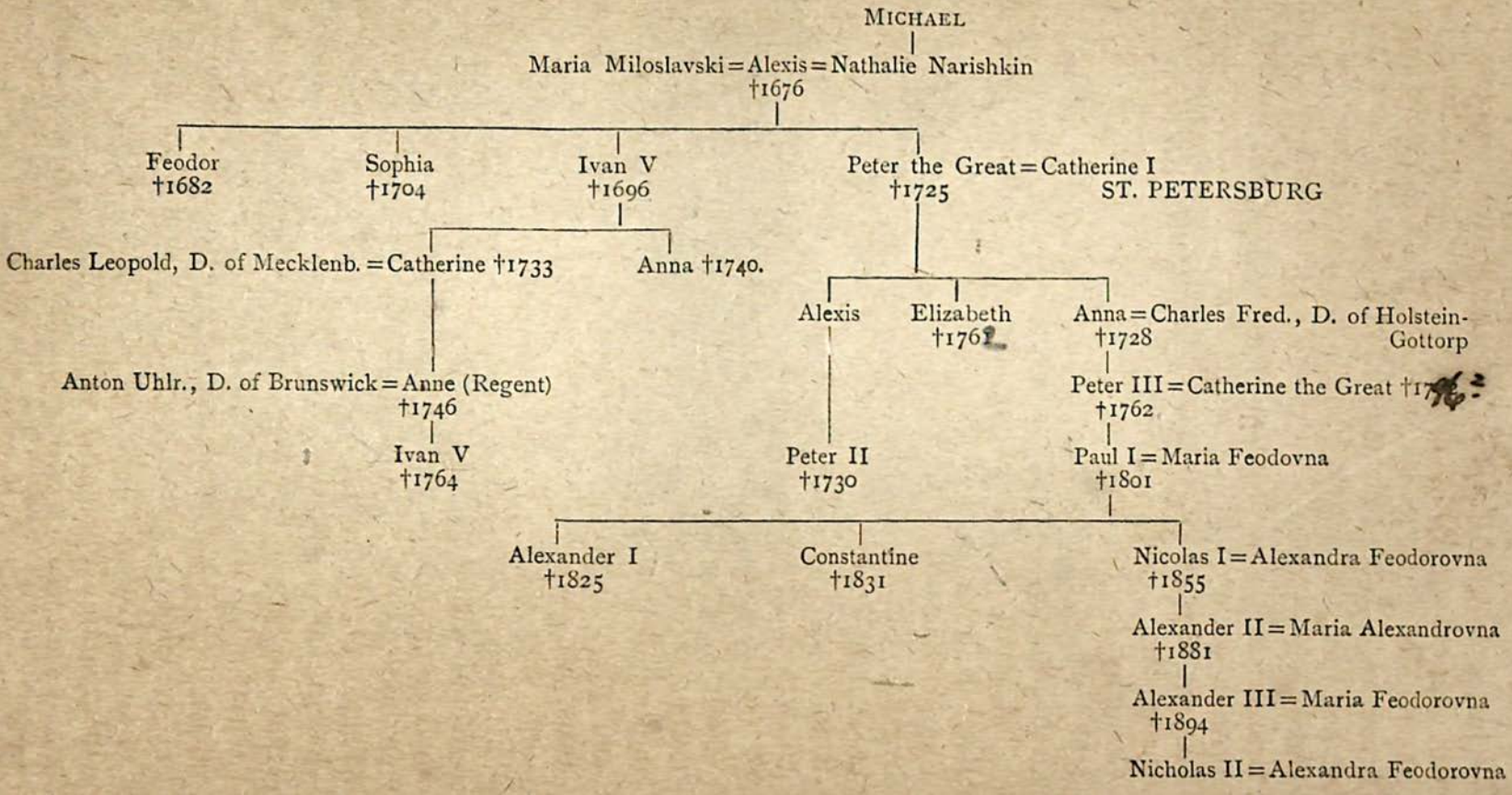
1. The daughter of Peter the Great, Princess Elizabeth Petrovna;

2. The grandson of Peter the Great, the son of his daughter Anne, who married the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein and died in 1728;

3. The niece of Peter the Great's invalid brother, who was the widow of the Duke of Courland.

DYNASTY OF THE ROMANOVS

SINCE 1613


MICHAEL
Maria Miloslavski = Alexis = Nathalie Narishkin
†1676
Feodor †1682
Sophia †1704
Ivan V †1696
Peter the Great †1725 = Catherine I
ST. PETERSBURG
Charles Leopold, D. of Mecklenb. = Catherine †1733
Anna †1740.
Alexis
Elizabeth †1761
Anna †1728 = Charles Fred., D. of Holstein-Gottorp
Anton Uhlr., D. of Brunswick = Anne (Regent) †1746
Peter III = Catherine the Great †1762
Ivan V †1764
Peter II †1730
Paul I = Maria Feodovna †1801
Alexander I †1825
Constantine †1831
Nicolas I = Alexandra Feodorovna †1855
Alexander II = Maria Alexandrovna †1881
Alexander III = Maria Feodorovna †1894
Nicholas II = Alexandra Feodorovna

Owing to the intrigues of the various nobles, Catherine's will was disregarded, and the throne fell to Anna Johanovna. She reigned until 1740, the whole time under the influence of a favourite, Biren. She nominated as her successor Ivan, the son of her niece Anna (the daughter of Catherine and of Leopold, Duke of Mecklenburg), who had married Anton Uhlrich, Duke of Brunswick. Ivan was not of age.

Anna declared herself Regent, but a court revolution in 1741 brought Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great, to the throne, and Ivan VI was imprisoned. Elizabeth at once sent to Germany for her nephew, the son of her sister Anne and the Duke of Holstein, consequently the grandson of Peter the Great, and declared him the heir to the throne.

Elizabeth died in 1762. She was succeeded by her nephew, Peter III, who was at the same time grandson of the sister of Charles XII of Sweden, and consequently a possible heir to the Swedish throne. Peter, who married the Princess Frederika of Anhalt-Zerbst (perhaps the most disagreeable figure in Russian history), lost no time in making himself intolerable. He was coarse, fundamentally silly, a drunkard, totally devoid of political, national, or patriotic feelings, passionately devoted to German fashions and customs, but capable only of taking interest in their superficial side, such as clothes and uniforms. His principal distraction was drilling his soldiers and playing with wax military dolls. He made peace with Prussia, ceded all that Elizabeth had won, and made himself as unpopular as possible in every way.

In July, 1762, he was deposed by a court revolution, which was effected without a drop of blood being shed, and his wife, who had taken the name of Catherine, when she was received into the Orthodox Church, took his place. A week afterwards, in the Palace of Ropsha, Peter was killed. Alexis Orlov, who was looking after the ex-Emperor, wrote to Catherine confessing that the Emperor had quarrelled and come to blows with Prince Bariatinski, and that in separating them he had accidentally done the deed. This letter first came to light in 1881. There is no evidence that the Empress was in any way implicated in the affair.[1] Ivan VI was confined in the prison of Schlüsselberg. In 1764 an attempt was made by a Cossack named Mirovitch to

[1] See Bilbasov, *History of Catherine II*, Vol. II, p. 127. Berlin, 1900.

liberate him, and Ivan was stabbed by an officer. The deposition of Peter III is a striking instance of the manifestation of public opinion in Russian history. No greater mistake can be made than to say that public opinion does not exist and has not existed in Russia, because the manner of its expression has been and is different from that of public opinion in other countries, and less regular. Peter III flouted public opinion in Russia and perished by so doing. He laughed at everything Russian, mocked at their speech, their customs, and their prayers. He was deposed by the people. His deposition was the expression of a state of mind which prevailed in every class of society, and led to a bloodless revolution.

Such was the sequence of events which determined the fate of the throne after the death of Peter the Great.

During the interlude of palace intrigues and court revolutions the Russian people made no particular progress. Of all the reigns that so abruptly followed one on the other during this period—there were six in thirty-seven years—that of the Empress Anne was the most sterile, that of the Empress Elizabeth the most prosperous.

The reign of the Empress Elizabeth lasted twelve years. She inherited the energy of her ~~grand~~father. Nearly half of her reign was spent in warfare. She took part in the Seven Years' War, defeated Frederick the Great, took and pillaged Berlin. At home the situation of her subjects was easier than it had been for many years. She abolished capital punishment in 1744, which was not to become prevalent again until the courts martial of the revolution of 1905; and in 1758 the first university of Russia was founded in Moscow, and the Stage became a national institution.

But although the reign of Elizabeth was not without outward glory and internal well-being, from the death of Peter to the accession of Catherine, Russia only advanced by fits and starts, because no general policy was followed, and there was no one who had a sufficiently wide outlook to carry on the work which Peter the Great had begun. The soul and essence of Peter the Great's work, as well as the quality which differentiated it from that of any of his predecessors (except Ivan IV, who even if he was unable to carry out the principle, seems clearly to have grasped it), was that he aimed at

the common welfare, the weal of the country and the whole people, and not at the interests of a dynasty. He endeavoured to realize the welfare of his subjects at large, by introducing law into chaos, and by establishing and strengthening the civil and political rights of the people. The negative side of his work, which prevented him from attaining complete success, was that he was compelled by circumstances to be more of a politician than a reformer; and that while he believed the resources of the people to be inexhaustible, and shrank from no expenditure of human life, he refused to take into consideration the habits, customs, and way of thinking, the conservatism and the traditions of the Russians of his day.

He forced his reforms on an unwilling and recalcitrant people with the same energy as he cut a canal or built a ship. He did not scatter the consciousness of law among the people, he did not sow public weal and civic duty as a living seed which would grow into a tree; but he forced it on them like a ready-made garment. The result was that when he died, although the significance of his work was indestructible (the political situation of Russia, for instance, which entailed with it immense possibilities of future inner development), it remained an unfinished but immovable framework and programme for future rulers to continue and fulfil. During the reign of his immediate successor his ideas made no progress; for they had not taken root in the country. His immediate successors, his grandson and his daughter, did not understand them. The further changes about the throne had solely the effect of giving the power to chance rulers and foreigners who thought merely of possession; and the State simply became an object of court intrigue.

The immediate successors of Peter had neither theory, plan, nor principle with regard to Peter's reform. They had no wish of going back on it,[1] and they were incapable of continuing it; so they just tinkered it here and there, according to the needs of the moment, and by so doing succeeded in destroying some of its most important factors and in effecting changes which had a lasting, and in some cases a deplorable, result.

The changes made during this period concerned the status of the nobility. In the period which elapsed between 1730 and 1760 the nobility attained to a totally different and more ad-

[1] Except Peter II.

vantageous position than that which Peter the Great had planned for them. In the first place, the law (made in 1714) by which their immovable property had been made inalienable, and could neither be sold nor mortgaged, and could only be bequeathed to one son in its entirety, was cancelled. The nobility were now able to apportion it and to dispose of it as they pleased.

Secondly, serfdom became the monopoly of the hereditary nobility, and the nobility was separated, legally, from the classes which, owing to Peter the Great's democratic reform, had shared its privileges: that is to say, the servants of nobles, merchants, and men who had not yet attained the rank of officer.

Thirdly, the rights of the master over the serf were extended; the master was given the power of dealing administratively with the serf. He could banish him to Siberia, or sentence him to penal servitude.

Fourthly, the nobility obtained the right of selling a serf apart from his land. The right of the serf to enter the army without the consent of his master was abolished.

Fifthly, a bank was instituted in 1754 for the nobility, from which they might obtain credit on their immovable property. All these laws had the effect of isolating the hereditary nobility both legally and morally from the rest of the community.

Sixthly, in 1762, on 19th July, Peter III issued a manifesto by which compulsory service for the hereditary nobility was abolished; and only the right of calling the nobility to service in special and extraordinary circumstances was retained. The obligation of sending their children to school was retained.

The logical sequence of this manifesto was the emancipation of the serfs which should reasonably have followed it immediately, since the peasants considered that serfdom was a temporary measure coinciding with the universal service of the gentry. The gentry served the Tsar and they served the gentry. It was a mutual bargain. But the service they rendered to the Tsar, as they expressed it, was permanent, the service rendered to the nobles temporary. The emancipation of the serfs did become a fact on the following day, on 20th February, only ninety-nine years later, in 1861.

As it was, exactly the opposite happened: the rights of the nobility over their serfs increased in proportion as their service obligations decreased, and serfdom entered into its third phase.

The first phase of serfdom before the *Ulozhenie* of the Tsar Alexis in 1649 (see chapter X.) consisted in the joint service of the peasant with the landowner: a service arranged by compact.

The second phase, ratified by the Ulozhenie in 1649, consisted in the hereditary obligation incumbent on the peasant of serving the State by farming private land in order to maintain the class of armed servants.

The third phase now became a fact. It was devoid of legal principle or political justification. Serfdom in Russia became in the eighteenth century what it had never been in Russia before; it ended where in other countries it had begun, namely, in slavery of the same type as that which existed in antiquity.

The master had uncontrolled rights over the slave except those of life and death, flogging with a whip, and torture. He could marry him to whom he pleased, sell him, and punish him in any way with the exception of the punishments mentioned above. Such was the immediate fate of Peter the Great's administrative reforms.

When Catherine II came to the throne in 1762, the work which Peter the Great had begun was taken up once more; and just as the task of Peter the Great consisted in winning a political position for Russia, which would give the country the chance and the possibility of internal development, so did that of Catherine consist in acquiring and making definite the external frontiers towards which Peter aspired, and in continuing to scratch off the crust of Orientalism from the Russian, and to render him accessible to the influences of European culture, civilization, and progress. Consequently the main factor of Catherine's policy consisted in the establishment of close relations and untrammelled intercourse between Russia and Western Europe.

We will first consider her foreign policy.

The main object of Catherine's foreign policy was to determine and consolidate the two important frontiers of the country: the western and the south-eastern. It so happened that the two questions were intermixed by circumstance, and the settlement of the one question had a decisive influence on the settlement of the other. In order to consolidate the western frontier, it was necessary once and for all to settle the Polish question, and that is what Catherine set about to do. But Poland had in the meantime reached a crisis in its own history which

made it possible for the active interference of Russia to prove a decisive and fatal factor. In order to understand this, it is necessary to glance at the state of affairs in Poland, and the nature of its political constitution. Poland was a republic, at the head of which there was a king: a monarchy which possessed the "free rights" of the Slavs.

While in the rest of Europe feudalism was creating a conflict between the nobility, the commons, and the Crown, which was to end in blending and intermingling the various classes, in Poland a few thousand privileged families considered themselves to be equal, called themselves brothers, the equal subjects of the republic; and each one of them individually had the right to oppose the collective will of all the others. This privileged class was bent on retaining its privileges and its independence, and their effort to do so resulted in the formation of three political principles. Firstly, the *Liberum veto*, by which each individual in the Diet or Polish Parliament had the right to veto the whole; this in itself acted as a check on all reforms.

Secondly, the right of confederation, which consisted in armed meetings, usually summoned spontaneously by provinces, and at the initiative of a few members, on special occasions, to remedy grievances. They were Diets without the *Liberum veto*. This resulted in perpetual anarchy.

Thirdly, the elective character of the Crown.

These three principles of the Polish aristocracy were disastrous.

In 1660 Poland was at the zenith of its glory, but the families from which it had become tradition to elect kings had died out. The King, John Kasimir, who had startled Europe by his victories and his feats, feeling that his end was near, suggested to the Diet that he should appoint a successor to the throne. The Diet would not hear of it. John Kasimir told them plainly and in words of ominous eloquence that their action must inevitably lead to the partition of Poland. Soon afterwards he abdicated and went to Paris.

In 1673 another conqueror, famous for his victories and his feats of arms, John Sobieski, was King of Poland. He likewise foresaw that disaster and ruin were inevitable, if the anarchy caused by the political principles of the nobles were to continue. He saw that the only solution was to organize

the succession to the throne. He proposed to the Diet that they should appoint his own son to succeed him. The Diet replied by declaring him to be a tyrant and the destroyer of Polish liberties.

Sobieski then sought an alliance with Russia. By the peace of 1660 Poland ceded to Russia Kiev, Smolensk, and the Ukraine, on the left bank of the Dnieper.

Frederick Augustus, Kurfürst of Saxony, was chosen king of Poland and reigned under the name of Augustus II. When Peter the Great made war on Sweden, Poland was split into two parties: the King, who, as Kurfürst of Saxony, had made an alliance with Peter, and who wished to remain neutral, and the Republic which regarded the King as irresponsible. But a vassal of Poland, the Duke of Courland, attacked Sweden, and Charles XII defeated him, and in consequence invaded Lithuania; Poland was dragged into the war, the results of which were that Augustus II was obliged to abdicate and flee, and Charles XII was defeated at Poltava.

Peter the Great remained master of the situation. The Poles turned to him and begged him to reconcile the two parties which the country was split into (the King and the Republic, that is to say, the Confederates), and to put an end to the Civil War. So Peter was asked to mediate. Peter decided to convoke a Diet, at which his Ambassador should act as mediator, to settle the Polish question; and if the two parties could not come to an agreement, he declared he would take the part of that side which was ready for an agreement, against the other.

All this meant that there was now in Poland a Russian party.

The conference took place at Liublin. Its significance lies not so much in its results as in the fact that Russia was exercising a political influence on the affairs of Poland, and sent troops into that country to support its arguments. Hitherto Russia's interest in Poland had exclusively been confined to religious questions; that is to say, the safeguarding of the Russian orthodox dissidents in Poland.

The Russian orthodox dissidents were constantly complaining that their rights were being infringed, and that they were being forced into union with the Catholic Church. There were about four million dissidents and about two million Jews and Moslems in a Catholic population of eighteen millions. The dissidents

were allowed full religious liberty—and Poland was the only country in Europe where this was the case at this time—but they were excluded from public office. In answer to a report complaining of persecution made by the Russian Bishops in 1722, Peter appointed a commission under Ignatius Rudakovski, with the object of investigating the matter, and of bringing back to orthodoxy those who had been forced into union with Rome. This he did, and more: he persecuted the Uniats[1] and he brought on himself the blame of the Russian Ambassador.

Nothing further was done until Catherine came to the throne. In 1762 the dissidents again complained of their situation, and George Koninski, Archbishop of Mohilev in White Russia, was sent to Warsaw in 1765 to report on the matter. Catherine regarded the question thus. "What political advantage," she asked a representative of the Orthodox Church in Poland, "will accrue to Russia if I take the part of the Greek orthodox believers in Poland?" The answer was, "Four hundred miles of rich territory and a large, orthodox population can be taken from Poland and annexed to Russia." Catherine made it perfectly plain[2], that her interests in the matter were purely political, and the Holy Synod shared her view. Catherine thought over the matter, and then made up her mind that her interference would be profitable politically. A diplomat, who had followed Russian affairs, remarked that Catherine, once she had settled on a plan, never abandoned it. So, having made up her mind, she set about to interfere. The way she interfered was by choosing a king for Poland. In August, 1762, she wrote to Count Stanislas Poniatovski, one of her favourites: "J'envoie incessamment le Comte Kayserling, ambassadeur en Pologne, pour vous faire roy après le décès de celui-ci."

August III died on September 25, 1763 (October 6, N.S.). In April (May, N.S.), 1764, Catherine made an alliance with Prussia, which was to last six years, and guaranteed herself from interference in that quarter. Russian troops were sent into Poland in order that the election of the king should be carried out with freedom, and on August 26 (September 7, N.S.) they ensured

[1] i.e. Russians who were in union with Rome of their own accord.

[2] See her letter to Count Kayserling, quoted by Bilbasov, Vol. II. But *vis-à-vis* to Europe her attitude was totally different: officially she spoke of the "sacred right of the dissidents, and said that she had in view nothing but *le bonheur et l'indépendance du genre humain.*"

this by defeating the Poles. Stanislas Poniatovski was elected King of Poland.

Thus Catherine had on the throne of Poland a king of her own choosing, and in her hands the question of the Russian dissidents, a powerful lever. When Stanislas was elected to the throne Catherine wrote to Prince Repnin, the Russian Ambassador at Warsaw, in the following terms (October 17, 1764) :—

"Il ne me reste plus qu'à vous recommander le plus que possible les objets des dissidents et celui des frontières : à l'un et l'autre ma gloire est intéressée, souvenez-vous en, ils sont entre vos mains."

Catherine in any case was not going to let the dissident question escape her memory. From the moment Stanislas was elected to the throne of Poland the game was practically in the hands of Catherine. The only difficulty was Prussia. From the moment the Russian alliance with Prussia was signed, the fate of Poland was sealed. France did not wish to act against this alliance, and Austria was powerless to do so. Maria Theresa did not at all like the part that Russia was playing, but she was not in a position to interfere.

The only hope for Poland was that of regeneration within. If the Polish constitution could be reformed, the anarchy put an end to, a regular army organized, the central executive strengthened by the institution of a regular succession to the throne and by the abolition of the *Liberum veto*, and all its anarchical consequences, then there would be still a possibility of the survival of Poland. But these were just the very things which Catherine was determined to prevent at all costs. She rejoiced in the Polish anarchy and called it "fortunate." She had Poniatovski elected because he was weak.

"Russia," she wrote in a footnote in a book on Frederick the Great, "chose Poniatovski as a candidate to the Polish throne, because among all the pretenders to the throne he has the least right, and consequently was bound to be the most grateful to Russia."

No sooner was he elected than Russia demanded that the dissidents should be placed on an equal footing with the Polish Catholics. The King was willing to make certain concessions to the orthodox dissidents, but he was unwilling to comply with this demand, for the simple reason that he knew it would prove

equivalent to allowing Russia to carry into effect the partition of Poland.

"It was not only intolerance," writes Brückner, "that caused the Poles to resist the dissidents; they well understood that if they yielded in the matter they might easily cause Poland to lose her independence."

The King was in a hopeless situation. He had the choice either of betraying the interests of his country or of losing the friendship of the Empress.

The dissidents made the most of the situation and expressed their demands with the greatest energy. It was decided to call a conference[1] which should settle the question, and which was to be safeguarded by the presence of Russian troops. Repnin, the Russian Ambassador, behaved like a dictator in the conference, and the Poles in vain protested against the presence of Russian troops in Poland, which they justly said made the conference into a farce.

The Polish nobles refused to confer political equality on the dissidents, and declared they would prefer to banish them; to which Repnin replied that if they continued to make a noise he would raise a greater noise than theirs.

"Whatever happens we have got
The Maxim guns, and you have not,"

was the purport of his speech.

There was nothing to be done but to yield to *force majeure*, and Repnin, as was natural, triumphed. Drastic measures were taken against the bolder of his opponents; some of them were seized and sent to Russia. There was to be no question of the abolition of the *Liberum veto;* and the conference ended without having any result. Such a state of things only led to fresh disorder. A desperate struggle followed the end of the conference. A league of patriots formed the Confederacy of Bar (called from the town of Bar), with the object of regenerating Poland, deposing the King, and restoring liberty to the country. A civil war began, not only between party and party, but between class and class.

The Russian diplomatists, with the help of Russian troops, got the upper hand, but the situation led directly to a compli-

[1] The Diet of Radom, 1767.

cation, namely, to a quarrel between Russia and Turkey, which was destined to prove a decisive factor in the fate of Poland.

The intervention of Turkey on behalf of Poland could only lead to one result. "To drive out the Russians by the help of the Turks," wrote a contemporary Pole, "is like setting fire to a house to get rid of mice." And the result of the Turkish intervention was the partition of Poland. The Turks, instigated by the French and, to some degree, by Polish refugees, at first demanded that the Russians should withdraw their troops from the Turkish frontiers; they then demanded the evacuation of Podolia, and finally the evacuation of the whole of Poland. War was declared in September, 1767. Catherine displayed energy, foresight, and spirit. The first year of the war was undecisive, but in June, 1770, Alexis Orlov, with several Englishmen under his command, destroyed a Turkish fleet, twice as large as his own, in the Bay of Chesme (Smyrna),—a repetition of Lepanto and an anticipation of Navarino. On the 7th June (N.S.) at Larga, and on the 21st (N.S.) at Kagul, Rumiantsov defeated Turkish armies largely superior in number to his own. But in spite of these brilliant victories Russia was not able to obtain terms of peace as advantageous as their importance deserved.

France was opposed to Russia; Austria knew that every Russian success strengthened Russia's position in Germany; Frederick II did not look on the success of Russian arms with favour. The only friendly Power was England. "I am so accustomed," wrote Catherine in 1792, "to the friendship of the English that I regard each one of them as a person who wishes me well, and I will act with regard to them, as far as it depends on me, accordingly."

The interests of the other Powers were conflicting, and so sharply at variance that a bargain on Poland was the only way of preventing a conflict between Austria, Prussia, and Russia, over the issues of the Turkish war.

Catherine, in making peace with Turkey, did not wish for the mediation of Prussia, and was determined that Austria should not prevent her from enjoying the fruits of her victories. On the other hand, Frederick wished at all costs to prevent a conflict between Austria and Russia, for fear of being dragged into it himself. He therefore proposed to Austria to take part in the partition of Poland. So the first partition came about in August,

1772.[1] Poland lost 4000 square miles and 5,000,000 inhabitants, and retained a territory of 6000 square miles and a population of 9,000,000. Russia obtained White Russia and Little Russia as far as the Dnieper and the Dniester, 1775 square miles and 1,800,000 inhabitants. In May, 1772, Russia concluded a truce with Turkey, and negotiations for peace were begun; but they led to nothing, as the Turks would not accept Catherine's conditions, and Catherine had determined not to throw away the fruits of her victories. The war was continued and peace was concluded in July, 1774, on the condition that the independence of the Tartar Khans of the Crimea was recognized. Russia obtained Azov, Kerch, Yenikale, Kinburn, and all the district between the Bug and the Dnieper, also the right of navigation on the Black Sea, besides an indemnity. In 1783 Russia definitely annexed the Crimea, which had already been for some years a semi-independent State under the protection of Russia. This was a heavy blow to the Turks, and they, justly fearing the ever-increasing encroachments of Russia, in July, 1787, presented the Russian Ambassador with an ultimatum, demanding the immediate dismissal of the Russian Consuls from Jassy, Bukarest, and Alexandria.

In August the Porte decided on war and imprisoned the Russian Ambassador. This second Turkish war proved the final and decisive factor in the fate of Poland. As long as the war with Turkey continued, Catherine's hands were tied, and the Powers hostile to Russia, and the Poles themselves, made an effort to take advantage of the situation. Ever since the first partition Poland had been in the position of a vassal state to Russia; and the Russian Ambassador in Poland played the part of a viceroy. When the war with Turkey broke out Russia was also at war with Sweden. Prussia therefore considered that the moment was favourable for introducing reforms into Poland and attempting a regeneration of the republic. The national party in Poland was stirred up. In March, 1790, a defensive alliance was concluded with Prussia. A new constitution was solemnly proclaimed in May, 1791. It was proposed to abolish

[1] In 1773 Catherine made a treaty with the Poles, which guaranteed the maintenance of the *status quo* and full religious liberty to the Polish Catholics: it was scarcely signed when over 1200 churches in the Ukraine were forcibly taken from the Greek Uniats, and their priests, with their flocks, compelled to join the Russian Church.—See *L'Eglise Catholique en Pologne*, Lescœur.

the *Liberum Veto* and the right of Confederation, but the proposals did not meet with the approval of the majority; and at the Diet only 157 members attended, while 327 were conspicuous by their absence. Austria looked on approvingly, and Prussia was favourably inclined.

Catherine was determined that nothing of the kind should occur. But as long as the war lasted with Turkey she took no steps, and recommended the utmost caution to her Ambassador. She knew the opposition to the new Constitution would get the better of the national party, and that in the consequent confusion it would be the easiest thing in the world to intervene.

As soon as Catherine made peace with the Turks at Jassy in January, 1792—by which the Turks agreed to carry out the stipulation of the former treaty (*Kutchuk-kainardji*) to cede Ochakov, together with the country between the Bug and the Dniester, and to recognize the Russian annexation of the Crimea —Catherine turned her attention to Poland.

The French Revolution was now in full swing, and constituted the chief preoccupation of the European Powers; and this gave Catherine a free hand in Poland.

In the beginning of 1792 she took steps to counteract the Polish reforms, and to stir up a counter-revolution; a conference was appointed, and Russian troops were sent into Poland to back up the diplomatic negotiations. Two-thirds of the country was in the hands of Russia. Catherine demanded that the King of Poland should give up the project of reform and the Constitution of 1791. Russian troops entered Warsaw. The Prussians occupied Danzig, Thorn, and Posen. The leaders of the Constitutional party fled, and negotiations were set on foot between Russia and Prussia for a second partition of Poland. In 1793 the second partition of Poland was settled. Prussia took Posen and part of Silesia, and Russia Volhynia, Podolia, and a part of Lithuania.

But the national feeling in Poland was not extinguished by this partition. It was further strengthened by the French Revolution, all the more so because Poland looked upon France as an ally, and the Poles began to turn their hopes towards a national rising. Catherine, on her part, was the more inclined to act energetically, since she hated the Jacobin movement and

regarded the Polish agitation as a part of it. Kosciuzko and other Polish patriots sought assistance in Paris.

Kosciuzko marched on Warsaw and compelled the Russians to raise the siege, but his effort was in vain; he was defeated by Suvorov near Warsaw at the battle of Macieiowice, and on November 4, 1794, Suvorov stormed Praga, the suburb of Warsaw. The city capitulated on the next day, and on 6th November the Russians entered Warsaw. In October, 1795, a treaty was signed, accomplishing the third partition of Poland. Austria took Cracow and all the country lying between the Pilica, the Vistula, and the Bug; Prussia took Warsaw and the country as far as the Niemen; the rest went to Russia, that is to say, that part of Lithuania which had been annexed after the second partition, the country between the Niemen and the upper course of the Bug and Courland—an area of 2000 square miles.

Thus came about that which, if there be a right and wrong in political affairs, has been justly called the greatest crime in history, and the long struggle between the two kindred races was decided. All that can be said in defence of Catherine's action is to be found brilliantly stated in Lord Salisbury's Essays; but the statement is entirely one-sided, and, although brilliant, is fundamentally unfair, because it is a brief for Catherine. But whether her action be considered as a political crime, or as a stroke of necessary statesmanship, there is no doubt about one thing, the partition of Poland would never have been possible if the Polish nation had not, without meaning to, done all in its power to bring it about.

Russian historians represent the matter as having been brought about by the religious intolerance and the refusal of the Poles to grant the orthodox dissidents political equality; but they omit to mention that when Catherine got the upper hand and the partition became a fact, the persecution of the Uniat Catholics by the orthodox Russians, the forcible conversion of the Polish Uniats to orthodoxy, was more drastic than any religious persecution which had hitherto been experienced in Russia.[1] The refusal of political rights to the orthodox dissidents by the Poles was a political question; the rights refused were *political* rights; whereas it was the *religious* rights, their liberty of worship, which were taken away from the Uniats by Catherine and her successors.

[1] This persecution was renewed in the reign of Nicholas I.

It was not the aggression of the Poles that brought about the partition; nor would Russian aggression, however pertinacious and however avid, have been enough to bring it about of itself.

Poland and Russia, two branches of the same race, grew up side by side, and seemed destined to fulfil a kindred destiny: Russia in acting as a buffer against the East, and Poland as the teacher of Western ideas and a defence against Western foes. Both races were distracted by wars and internal disorder. But Russia developed, during a long period of war and anarchy, a sense of national unity, and emerged from the long trial a nation with a definite political aim which grew into a tradition and resulted in the formation of a strong executive monarchy; whereas Poland overlapped Russia and made swift strides ahead in the beginning of the race, and far outstripped her rival not only in progress and in culture, but for a time in political power also. During the "Time of Trouble," when Russia was without a sovereign, the prey of countless pretenders and adventurers, devastated by civil war and seething with anarchy, it seemed as if Poland had definitely got the upper hand. When the Poles occupied the Kremlin, the Russians, as we have seen, asked of their own accord for a Polish Tsar. It seemed as if there was to be a large Poland and a small vassal Russia. But out of the ashes of anarchy national consciousness arose like a phœnix in Russia, and regenerated the country politically.

This was the moment when Poland should have paused and looked at things at home and into her own soul, and inquired whether changes were not necessary in order to safeguard and consolidate her position. But no such thing happened; no consciousness of political humility, and consequently of nationality, arose, and no effort was made towards political unity. The Poles maintained, in despite of reason and in defiance of logic, an antiquated feudal aristocratic Constitution which could not help leading to social anarchy and to the political dismemberment of the State. The result of this system soon bore fruits. By the time Peter the Great came to the throne Poland was already weak. When Catherine came to the throne Poland was almost powerless. But the Poles, while they refused to change what was the cause of their disadvantage, in no way modified their claims and pretensions, as far as any conflicting interests

with Russia were concerned; until at last they found themselves in a vicious circle, when to yield to Russia's demands would be ruin, and to refuse to yield to them ruin likewise. But even at the last moment, when ruin was at their very door, no unanimity with regard to political change was possible, and the Polish magnates refused to give unanimous support to any one leader. Since they had against them a united kingdom with, at the head of it, a woman endowed with the very highest political gifts, an unswerving purpose, and penetrating foresight, the result was obvious. In a word, Poland and Russia were two rivals who struggled during centuries for the supremacy amongst the Slav races in Russian territory. During the struggle Russia, the weaker of the two, was inspired by an idea and carried it out, namely, political unity; Poland, on the other hand, instead of one idea, had a dozen conflicting ones and therefore achieved political anarchy: that is why Poland necessarily and definitively succumbed.[1]

Thus, as far as the political condition of Russia is concerned, the result of the reign of Catherine was (1) finally to settle the Polish question and to consolidate the western frontier of Russia; (2) to acquire the Crimea and to consolidate the south-eastern frontier.

As far as the internal condition of Russia is concerned, Catherine continued the work which Peter the Great had begun, of giving Russia access to Western ideas and influences, but she set about the task in a different way; that is to say, in a manner which corresponded to and benefited her own epoch, and which would not have been possible in the days of Peter the Great. Whereas Peter the Great concentrated his attention—and rightly—on the concrete branches of reform, on the practical and exterior side of things: on the army, the civil service, the fleet, manufactories, and canals, Catherine turned her efforts to the moral and intellectual side of things. As somebody has said, "Peter gave the autocracy a body and Catherine a soul."

She was successful in carrying on his work; she carried it a large step farther. She left Russia more powerful without, and more civilized within. Although she was, as she said, a

[1] It was a victory of democracy over aristocracy: the triumph of the will of the people, expressed by one sovereign, over the conflicting wills of a band of aristocrats.

republican at heart, a disciple of Montesquieu, the friend of Grimm and of Voltaire and of Diderot, she did nothing to modify the autocratic form of the government. At the beginning of her reign she convoked a representative assembly which was purely deliberative, and she sent away the deputies at the beginning of the Turkish war, but this was not merely an empty act; she was able to gauge the opinion of various classes of society on the state of the law, and the various committees of the assembly were instrumental in carrying out a considerable work of reform. She was distressed by the French Revolution, but the events in France merely confirmed a policy that had been hers from the first. Her policy was deliberate, and based on the conviction of what was necessary, possible, and fit, and not on fear. She did not know what fear meant, and although extremely pliant by nature, she could be as firm as a rock when she chose. No, it was deliberately that she clove to autocracy.

"The Russian Empire," she wrote to Prince Viazemski, "is so large that any other government save an absolute monarchy would be harmful, since any other form of government involves more delay in the execution of orders, a greater number of various conflicting interests, which lead to disintegration of power and force, than the power of the sovereign having in his hands the means of cutting away all abuses, and seeking his welfare in that of his people, and regarding all, in the words of the Gospel, as his flock."

Her whole aim was to strengthen the executive. All institutions were to depend directly on the will of the sovereign. Her chief instrument of government remained the Senate, the foremost institution of the Empire; but she endeavoured to widen the range of her instruments of government, while retaining the exclusive manipulation of them. In general, her policy was inspired by extraordinary wisdom and good sense. The following passage, where she lays down her policy with regard to the foreign nationalities contained in the Russian Empire, affords a striking instance of this:—

"Little Russia, Liflandia, and Finland are provinces which must be ruled according to their privileges; to destroy these by doing away with all of them suddenly would be highly imprudent, and to call them foreign countries and treat them accordingly for the same reason would be more than a mistake: it

would be stupid. It is our duty to attach these provinces to us by the easiest means, so that they should grow to be Russian and cease to be like wolves with one eye on the wood. It is extremely easy to do this if sensible and selected people are sent as governors to these provinces."

What a lesson one reads in these words for those Russian Nationalists whose policy consists in storing up a fictitious hostility towards the foreign races which form part of the Russian Empire!

It was said that Peter the Great opened a window on to Russia; the window which he made opened on to political ideas. Catherine opened another window which let in the atmosphere of Western European culture. The activity of the French mind, the classical tradition in literature, and the philosophy of the Cyclopédists poured into Russia and made a deep impress on the Russian mind.

Catherine opened the Academy in St. Petersburg; German science was the principal import, but it had no effect on Russian literature. Tatischev wrote the first Russian history and became the father of Russian scientific history. Prince Kantemir wrote the first literary Russian verse: didactic satires, pseudo-classic and French in style. But as far as literature was concerned the most important figure between the reign of Peter the Great and the nineteenth century was Michael Lomonosov, who belongs to her epoch, although he can scarcely be included in her reign, since he died in 1765. He did for the Russian language what Peter the Great did for the nation. He scratched off the crust of foreign barbarity; he expelled the German words which had crept in; he established the rules of metre and versification. He was a man of science, a mathematician, a chemist, with a mind whose activity and range seemed infinite; he was not a poet, although he wrote verse, but he made ready the instrument of poetry on which others were to play. He was determined that Russia should have poetry, just as Peter the Great was determined Russia should have a navy. He purified the language, and delivered it from alien excrescences and blemishes, and left it, as he said, "With the vivacity of French, the strength of German, the softness of Italian, the richness and powerful conciseness of Greek and Latin." He mended and tuned the instrument; the great player had only to come.

During Catherine's reign French influence was predominant

in Russia. Diderot came to St. Petersburg, and the Russian military schools were invaded by French professors.

Voltaire and Rousseau were the fashion; "equality" the watchword; but the society of this period made no attempt to translate the new theories into action, or to practise what they preached so gaily and so intelligently. They talked of the rights of man; but their economic situation depended on thousands of men having scarcely any rights at all. Catherine broached the question of the emancipation of the serfs, and made an attempt during the first years of her reign to move in the matter, but she had to give it up; the interests of the nobility, of those to whom she owed the throne, were too strong; so serfdom remained where it was in the preceding reign, and the position of the peasantry was deplorable. And for the first time the condition of the peasantry bore ominous fruits.

Since service was no longer compulsory for the nobility (a state of things which Catherine confirmed), and since the nobles retained their rights over the serfs, the peasants considered that the compact, on which their service was based, had been violated, and their discontent found violent expression. In 1773 a Cossack of the Don, called Emilian Pugachev, came forward as pretender under the name of Peter III, and a violent insurrection broke out amongst the Cossacks. Landed proprietors were murdered by their serfs, and Pugachev's forces increased to 30,000. He took the fortified places of the Ural, besieged Orenburg, and stirred up the Bashkirs and the Kalmucks. Had he not been recklessly barbarous, his chance of success might have been greater. As it was, the revolt, after it had been partially subdued by General Bibikov, broke out again, and Pugachev took Kazan. He was finally defeated by Colonel Michelson and taken; his head was cut off at Moscow. The insurrection is of great importance in that it furnished an object-lesson of what was certain to occur if serfdom were not abolished from above.

Catherine increased the power and strengthened the position of the nobility, and although she clearly understood that the situation of the peasants cried out for reform, and although she took certain steps in this direction and made plans with this object, yet, in spite of this, their situation was not bettered during her reign; in fact, to a certain degree, it took a change for the worse.

How did this come about ?

The strange contradiction between Catherine's theoretical desires and views and her practice can perhaps be accounted for thus : Catherine was obliged to reckon with public opinion. It was owing to the strength of public opinion that she had come to the throne, and it was on public opinion that the security of her crown was based. Educated public opinion at this period consisted solely of the opinion of the nobility. The nobility were opposed to emancipation practically, because their interests were at stake ; and theoretically, because they did not consider the peasants would be bettered by it ; they were still further opposed to it because they feared that the actual process would cause a general revolt among the peasantry ; that the peasantry, being granted freedom, would rise, seize the land, and murder the landowners.

The slightest hint of emancipation caused agitation among the peasantry. The revolt of Pugachev indicated the kind of thing which might be likely to happen if the status of the peasantry were to be suddenly changed. But whether the theories of the landed proprietors were baseless or reasonable, and however interested their motives were, there can be no doubt that it would have been impossible for Catherine to carry out the reform in face of their universal opposition, without risking a doubtful and disastrous revolution. Emancipation could only be carried out with the co-operation of the nobility, and the time for that had not yet come. Anything save a radical change in the whole system would have proved useless, and for such a change, it was at the same time too late and too early. Too late because the conditions of the nobility had changed : they had acquired a new power and independence which had not been theirs in the days of Peter the Great ; and too early because they had not yet reached the stage of understanding the necessity of the reform.

Therefore, in acting as she did, it may be fairly said that Catherine displayed the sensitiveness of the born statesman to the exact grade of the temperature of public opinion, the intuitive apprehension of what was possible and impossible. The nobility was there. It was a fact ; moreover, it was the only instrument available : Catherine aimed at making the best of it and at getting the maximum amount of profit out of it.

When the French Revolution occurred, Catherine's personally

liberal ideas were modified. She no longer indulged in liberal aspirations and theories. This is why she strengthened the position of the nobility. Her aim was to prepare the way for self-government and representative legislation, which she considered to be impracticable in the present. In order to accomplish this she created *pouvoirs intermédiaires*, intermediate powers between the people and the throne in the administration of the provinces. By exempting the nobility from service, by defining their position in the State, and by granting them a charter (*dvorianskaia gramota*, in 1785) she made them into a privileged class. She also defined the rights and duties of the burghers, including merchants, in a special "urban regulation" (*gorodskoë polozhenie*), and endeavoured to create a bourgeoisie which would take part in local government. This she was powerless to create. But if she failed in carrying out in practice the ideals of Montesquieu, her reforms are, nevertheless, of cardinal importance, since the provincial administration of Russia to this day is based on them.

Peter the Great, as we have seen, divided Russia into Governments and provinces. The division was insufficient to meet the needs of justice and administration. It was necessary to divide the immense territory of Russia into a still greater number of Governments, and to increase the number of administrative institutions. Russia was accordingly redivided into fifty Governments and each Government into districts, *Uiezdi*—and this division subsists to-day.

In 1765 the administration of the Governments was defined. Its constitution was changed and the executive powers were redistributed. The administration of the Government was allotted to the governor, who was appointed by the Empress. The other high officials in the Government were appointed by the Senate; many of them were chosen from the local nobility and from the merchants. The courts of justice were separated from the administrative institutions, and the civil court was separated from the criminal court. Three courts were instituted in every provincial town: a criminal court for all classes of the subjects of the government; a civil court for civil cases; a State court for the gathering of the taxes. Special courts were also instituted for the affairs of widows and orphans, and special institutions made for all matters concerning hospitals and charity.

In matters of the national health, medicine, and hospitals, Catherine effected a vast reform, and introduced vaccination, setting the example by having herself vaccinated. Besides this, she secularized the lands of the clergy.

After that of Peter the Great, the reign of Catherine is the greatest in Russian history, and it is perhaps the richest and the fullest of them all. I have not dwelt on Catherine's character, as she was not a Russian, although she understood her subjects, their frame of mind and feelings, and the needs of her adopted country as well as or better than any native. She was a great ruler, and she made her adopted country a greater and a happier place. There is no better summary of her aims and aspirations, which she was singularly successful in carrying out, than the following extract from a letter which she wrote to Prince Viazémski :—

" It is as well that you should know with whom you have to deal. . . . You will find that I hold no other views than the welfare and glory of my country, and I desire nothing else save the weal of my subjects, to whatever rank they may belong. My thoughts turn solely to one goal, namely, that within as well as without, the kingdom should enjoy order, prosperity, and peace. I am exceedingly fond of the truth, and you may say everything to me without fear, if only profit may ensue to the business in hand. I hear from all that you are an honest man ; and I hope to prove to you by experience that at my Court men with such qualities can live happily. I will also add that I do not ask you for flattery, but only for sincere intercourse, and steadfastness in the execution of your business."

CHAPTER XVI

ALEXANDER I—THE DECEMBRISTS

FROM the death of Catherine II, who was succeeded by her son Paul, to the death of her grandson Alexander II in 1825, the history of Russia is closely linked with the history of Europe, and powerfully affected by the genius and the far-reaching ambition of Napoleon. It can be dealt with briefly. In the first place because the epoch is well known, and secondly, because its purport concerns the international more than the national history of Russia—Russia as a part of Europe rather than the internal development of the Russian people and its institutions. Russia experienced once more a period of troubles, and foreign war and foreign invasion; an epical epoch, recalling the crisis of Russian history in the fifteenth century, with this difference, that the foreign peril created no internal anarchy, and the power of the executive remained unshaken.

The reign of Paul was distinguished by the exploits of Russia's greatest soldier, Suvorov, who, besides being a great soldier, was characteristically Russian, in his simplicity of habits, his humour, his spirit in the face of obstacles, his courage, and his endurance. During the Napoleonic period, Russia, in the face of disaster, once more, as in the "Time of Trouble," attained an increased sense of unity and nationality, and emerged stronger and more solid from the struggle.

Alexander I played a national part. He fitly embodied and gave dignified expression to the wave of patriotism which poured over the country.

Popular opinion during his reign was centred on one thing only: the defence of the soil of Russia. And, as in the hour of Napoleon's defeat Alexander proved himself to be the most generous, so in the hour of his triumphant aggression, he proved the most stubborn of enemies.

As far as the internal situation is concerned, attempts were made to modify the theoretic autocracy and to allow it to develop on the lines of legal monarchy. When Alexander I came to the throne he desired to proclaim the rights of man and to give Russia a constitution; but the attempts he made to do so were unsuccessful. The question was first raised in 1801–2, but came to nothing. In 1809 Alexander reverted to plans of reform and corresponded with Thomas Jefferson, who sent him books on the American Constitution. A definite scheme of reform was drawn up by Speranski, who was the Emperor's Minister and high in his favour, and enjoyed his full confidence. The main purpose of Speranski's plan was to introduce law and order into the administration of the country, for it was the conspicuous absence of law and order which all classes of the population were bewailing. Speranski based his project on the premise that law and order could only be attained by granting political rights to the people. It is now a hundred years since Speranski made his project, and since then there have been innumerable attempts at reform by means of legislation, and they all proved fruitless.

The only reforms that have as yet born fruit—indirect and by no means considerable, yet still tangible fruits—are those which are the result of there being some kind of popular representation in Russia. Speranski was convinced that reform must come from above, and that the Emperor shared his view. His aim was that constitutional government in Russia should be not the result of a conflict between the people and the Government, but that the Government should generously and of its own accord seek the co-operation of the people in the work of reform.

Unfortunately the feeling of the Emperor towards Speranski cooled; not only did whispering tongues poison truth, and Speranski's enemies spread everywhere the rumour that he was a traitor, but Speranski himself was imprudently free in his criticism of the Emperor, and what he said was repeated to his master and caused the deepest offence.

The Emperor, not without reason, found Speranski guilty of grave ingratitude, nor was he satisfied with his work as a minister. The result was that Speranski lost favour. He was banished to Novgorod and then to Perm; and although the Emperor had already begun to put the plan into execution, it was from that moment abandoned. The invasion of Russia

by Napoleon intervened, and all that remained of the great transformation outlined by Speranski was the institution of the Council of State, which took the place of the projected Legislative Assembly. Until 1906 the Council of State was the chief legislative body in Russia. Speranski was recalled from exile, and was subsequently made Governor of Pensa, and in 1819 Governor of Siberia; but the Emperor never forgave him, although he saw him again and worked with him.

In the summer of 1819 Prince Viazemski presented to the Emperor a draft of a constitution which had been framed by N. Novasilstzov. The Emperor discussed the matter and the part Prince Viazemski had taken in drafting the constitution; he expressed himself satisfied with the result and hoped to carry the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. But whether it was owing to the influence of Metternich, under whom the Emperor subsequently fell, or whether Alexander's advisers considered that Russia was not ready for a constitution, which was true, or whether it was the result of the change in the Emperor's character, which veered from enthusiasm to disillusion, the project was not carried out. It is probable that Speranski and other reformers held a too optimistic view with regard to the preparedness of Russia for a constitution; but where Speranski was far-seeing and right, was in saying that unless the initiative came from above, it would come from below. The first stage of the fulfilment of this prophecy occurred in 1825.

The shape it took was the so-called "Decembrist" rising. Alexander I died in 1825. His eldest son, Constantine, renounced his claim to the throne, so he was succeeded by his younger son Nicolas, who fixed December 26 as the day on which he would receive the oath of allegiance from his troops. Speranski was ordered to draw up the proclamation.

An organized insurrection took place. It was the fruit of numerous secret societies which had existed for some time all over Russia. The conspirators had gone to the various barracks and obtained the support of certain regiments. They assembled in the Square of the Senate near the Cathedral of St. Isaac, and shouted "Long live Constantine!" and "Long live Constitutzia!" (Constitution), thinking it to be his wife. Nicolas, supported by the majority of the guard regiments, appeared on the scene and read his proclamation. It was answered by

murmurs. Shots were interchanged. The Metropolitan of St. Petersburg was sent to persuade the rebels to disperse; but they threw stones at him. The Emperor wished to avoid bloodshed: the populace showed no sign of supporting the mutineers. At last orders were given to fire on the rebels: two rounds were fired; a certain number of them were killed. By the evening everything was quiet and the insurrection was at an end.

The Decembrist insurrection was, as I have said, the result of secret societies; the secret societies were in their turn the result of a liberal movement which arose among the nobility and the gentry, and which was due to the impression they received from the events which were happening in Europe. During the Napoleonic Wars a great many Russian officers had spent years abroad, especially in France. They came back to Russia in 1815, after the Congress of Vienna, considerably influenced by what they had seen, and different in their outlook and in their ideas from their contemporaries in St. Petersburg. They took life seriously; they drank no wine and did not play cards. History, politics, and foreign newspapers were their chief interests. Pushkin called them the Puritans of the North. They were not revolutionaries; their aim was the extension of culture, and the public welfare, and they were willing to assist the Government and to co-operate with it.

With this end in view they formed a society in imitation of the German youth, whose rules were copied from those of the *Tugendbund*, and whose functions were divided into four branches: philanthropic, educational, economic, and judicial. All this was known to the Emperor and no objection was made to it. But when, after 1819, the various Governments of Europe entered on a reactionary path, the Russian Liberals naturally took the side of the people against their Government. The Government of Russia, following the rest of Europe and the leadership of Metternich, became reactionary also. And this led Russian Liberalism to change its character. The *Tugendbund*, which was called "The Society of Welfare," and which was philanthropic and moderate in character, was closed by its founders in 1821. Two new societies which were not social, but political and revolutionary, took its place. The first one, which was formed in St. Petersburg, and whose members consisted chiefly of officers of the guards, was called the

"Northern Society"; the second, the "Southern Society," was organized in the head-quarters of the southern army. The success of revolution in Spain and in Italy encouraged the societies to follow their example. The death of Alexander I forced the conspirators to immediate action, especially as exact information with regard to the societies, their aims and members, was already in the hands of the Government. Alexander I was already in possession of this information, but he did not act on it.

The political results of the Decembrist revolution were nil. Public opinion in Russia became Nationalist, and philosophy took the place of politics; Liberalism was diverted into the channel of Romanticism. But this Romantic movement had a more vital, lasting, and far-reaching effect on the history of the nation than any political movement could have had, for it gave birth to a whole springtide of poetry in which, for the first time, the soul of the Russian people found adequate expression, and it left an inheritance of immortal song, which was henceforth to be the inestimable boon, and the crowning glory of the Russian nation.

CHAPTER XVII

PUSHKIN

IN the invasion of springtide and pageant of blossom which followed closely on the Decembrist movement, the dominant and supreme fact is the apparition of Pushkin. To those who are familiar with Russian literature, it is no more necessary to dwell upon the significance of Pushkin's work than it is necessary to expatiate on the importance of Shakespeare to those who are familiar with English literature. And to those who are unfamiliar with Russian literature, and ignorant of the Russian language, it is almost impossible to bring home the significance of Pushkin, for three reasons: firstly, because one line of quotation would be more to the point than chapters of analysis; secondly, because, without any quotation at all, analysis is bereft of its substantial evidence; and thirdly, because translation in the case of Pushkin is not only inadequate, but hopeless. There is, however, a third class of people to whom something more than the bare statement that Pushkin was a great poet may not be altogether superfluous. It is the increasing class of people, who, although ignorant of the Russian language, are interested in Russian literature, and may or may not take the trouble to acquire the language, should their interest grow to be sufficiently keen. For such as these it is worth while to try to indicate the nature of Pushkin's work, to try to show them what they may expect; what the quality of Pushkin's poetry is compared with that of other European poets. I also hope that a brief exposition of this kind may not prove uninteresting to the general reader, who is interested in poetry, although he knows no Russian, and has no intention of undertaking the study of that language.

We have already seen that Lomonosov had prepared and

tuned the instrument of the Russian language. In a way he accomplished for literature what Peter the Great did for the political position of the country; he set it on a level with other European languages; but he fell short of Peter the Great in this: he merely tuned the language; the notes that he struck himself were of no importance; whereas Peter the Great not only mended and tuned the instrument, but played on it, like a pianist in an orchestra, the leading motive of an immense concerto.

In the case of literature, the instrument had to wait for the advent of Pushkin for its full possibilities to be called forth, for its range and compass to be proved, for the depth of its tone to stir the hearts of a whole nation. Karamzin (1766–1826), the historian, had done this in prose. He had swept away convention, the stilted language and forms which had been imported into the language from abroad, and he spoke to the Russian heart by using the Russian language unmarred and pure; and besides this great master of prose there had been a poet and a classic, namely, Krylov (1763–1844), the creator of fables, the Russian La Fontaine, whose work is national and smells of the Russian soil, and combines a biting humour with notes of haunting tenderness.

Zhukovski (1763–1852) too had explored the literature of Europe and translated Schiller's ballads, Gray's "Elegy," and many other masterpieces, into verse of great beauty, besides writing some delicate lyrics; but neither Krylov nor Zhukovski, admirable as is the work of each in its way, had given Russian literature the right to boast of a great poet, equal to the great poets of Europe, and lord over the hearts of a whole nation. Pushkin did this: he definitely emancipated Russian literature, and by his work alone he gave it the right to claim a proud place among the poetical literatures of Europe.

It is not easy to define the place of Pushkin among the poets of Europe. And if it is easy to overrate the importance of his work, it is equally easy to underrate it. Nobody in Russia would claim for him a place among the very highest, if by the very highest we mean the supreme triumvirate of all: Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. But if we make a somewhat larger circle of great poets and include Goethe, Milton, and Racine, the question becomes more difficult.

He has qualities which equal Goethe at his best; but he has

not Goethe's undefinable greatness, which gives such poignancy and weight to his utterance, when inspiration carries him beyond his intellect. He has not the loftiness of soul either of Milton or of Racine. Compared with these poets, he seems to be bordering on the shallow, to be verging on superficiality.

We could further extend the circle of poets and include Musset, Leopardi, Shelley, Heine, Byron, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Keats. Of these I would leave Shelley and Heine out of consideration: Shelley, because whatever opinion may be held as to his merits or demerits, he is an exceptional phenomenon in the realm of poetry, a star it is impossible to classify, different in kind from the rest, a changeling, a bard pouring out lyric ecstasy without compare, a priest of elemental nature; and Heine, because of his curious blend of contradictory qualities. They must be considered apart or not at all.

To resume the thread of the argument, compared with this larger band, I have no hesitation in saying that Pushkin is greater than all of these. He is greater than Byron and Musset; he has Byron's strength and directness, without his slovenliness and lapses into discord; he has an impeccable sense of form that was altogether beyond Byron's reach. He is greater than Musset. He has Musset's passion and grace without his carelessness, he has Lamartine's easy inspiration, and something more manly and more solid than is to be found in either of them. He is greater than Leopardi and Keats, because his range is wider and his achievement larger; he has a greater number of notes to his lyre; his humanity is deeper, his message richer and stronger, while his art is just as perfect as theirs.

There remains Victor Hugo. The test I would propose in order approximately to determine his place among the European poets is the following. Take a great poet in any country, and imagine that he alone existed; would that poet be unanimously accepted by the verdict of his countrymen and of other countries as an adequate representative of the poetry of the nation? In the case of Pushkin this would undoubtedly be the case. There may one day in Russia be a greater poet than Pushkin, but if the work of all the other Russian poets were annihilated to-morrow, the Russian nation would still feel that in the writings of Pushkin its soul, its desire, its outlook, its national pulse had found adequate expression. Could this be said of Victor Hugo?

The English literary judges would probably answer in an unhesitating affirmative. Would the French? I doubt it. Victor Hugo is certainly one of the world's great lyric poets, and he certainly expressed a great many shades of the French soul; but if his work alone existed, would the French genius admit that it had found full and final expression? I think not. But if Racine were left, the case would be different. The French might then deplore the lyric splendours they had lost, but they would still feel that the greatest things in the French soul were with them, expressed in a manner and shape which might be equalled, but never excelled.

The same would hold good as regards Goethe; and although Pushkin does not equal Goethe at his *very best* (he has written nothing like the scenes between Faust and Gretchen, nothing equal to, say, the twelve best lyrics of Goethe) the general level of his work is higher, and not only higher in respect of artistic felicity and sustained inspiration, but higher as far as its general interest, humanity, and feeling are concerned. It is fair to say that Pushkin is as representative a poet as Goethe, and that *at his best* he approaches Goethe at his best.

With regard to Racine and Milton, the same thing can be said. Pushkin never walks in that atmosphere, that serene starlight where their spirits move, consequently his verse, at its finest, has not the loftiness and the nobility which stamp their utterance as with the signature and seal of an archangel; but, on the other hand, his humanity is richer than Milton's; he touches human chords beyond the ken of that austere soul; his psychology, his faultless and simple diction are as amazing as those of Racine, and there is a breath of nature in his work, a homeliness and a gaiety beyond the ken of the great dramatist. I should put Pushkin in the same room with Goethe, Milton, and Racine; but if these were to sit down to dinner and be placed according to their merits, I feel certain that Pushkin might make the following speech:—

"Gentlemen,—The world may disagree as to our merits; and since we are each of us profoundly national: since Mr. Milton is profoundly English, Monsieur Racine profoundly French, and I profoundly Russian, there will probably be no end to the dispute between the representatives of our respective countries; and since our countrymen can never be as well acquainted with

each other's languages as they are with their own, it is probable that they will never fix upon a fair criterion. But there is one thing we may be certain about: our poetical works, however highly we estimate them, have affected our own country alone. M. Racine has left the English nation cold, and the Italians are not greatly roused by *Paradise Regained*. It is true that the peasants in my country read *Paradise Lost*, but they read it, as children read a fairy tale, for the story, and in prose, and they have no notion that it was written in verse. My lyrics, my tales, and my novels in verse, in spite of the comprehension of other countries which they reveal, in spite of the power of assimilation and the all-embracing humanity which they attest, cannot be said to have stirred the wells of thought and feeling in Europe. Whether this is because the various countries are unfamiliar with our respective languages is another question; it is an explanation, but it does not change the fact. Now Herr von Goethe has succeeded where we failed. His poetry has stirred other nations than his own; it has become a part not only of the heritage of Germany, but of the inheritance of Europe and of the whole civilized world. Yet it is not for that reason, gentlemen, that I am going to ask you to cede to him the place of honour. It is not because *Faust* is better known all over Europe than *Athalie*, *Samson Agonistes* or *Evgenie Onégin*, that I think we should yield him the palm; because, however widely known Goethe's *Faust* may be, Gounod's *Faust* is more widely known still.

"That whole generations of Frenchmen may ignore your work, Mr. John Milton; that the English and the Germans may be insensible to your harmonies, Monsieur Jean Racine; that all these nations (and the Belgians and Swiss into the bargain) may be unacquainted with my work, does not prove that our verse is not good. Our countrymen think it excellent, and they are the final judges. Musset turned pale when he heard Rachel speak a certain couplet out of *Phèdre*, and Turgeniev said he would have thrown all his prose into the fire to have written certain four lines in my 'Conversation between the Poet and the Bookseller.' And not only our countrymen, but those who have imbibed our language, either through having learnt it in their childhood, or from having an ear and a soul made for poetry, as people have an ear and a soul for music (for such an ear and for

such a soul frontiers do not exist, and for such men, all countries are provinces of one promised land), recognize and thrill to the beauty of our lines. I know an Englishman who was haunted for days by the sound and the sense of a stray line of mine, just as Gautier was haunted by Musset's little song in Venice. Homer would still remain the greatest poet in the world, although only a dozen people knew Greek, and the absolute supremacy of Sappho as a lyrist is not diminished by the fact that nine-tenths of the world have not read her at all, or have only read her in a translation. The 'stop-shorts' of the great age of Chinese poetry are believed to be unequalled, although few Europeans know Chinese. For all we know there may come a second Pentecost, when Englishmen will understand French, Scotsmen understand English, Russians understand Polish, and Frenchmen understand Belgian. No, it is not on account of our being less well known; it is not on account of *Faust* being better known than all our works put together, that I claim the first place for Herr von Goethe. It is because he wrote *Faust* and a few songs, and we didn't and couldn't.

"Monsieur Racine, your form is unmatched, and unpraisable beyond its merits; your knowledge of the human heart and the feminine mind is unsurpassed; your women put all the modern psychological novelists to shame; your Nero is a more convincing Antichrist than has been imagined by a generation of decadents; your Phèdre stands above all our theatrical 'parts,' in her feverish complexity, her troubled simplicity, her stricken majesty: an ideal for ever beyond the reach of the genius of actresses. Your verse has sometimes the note of silver trumpets sounding in the dawn, the music that Lucifer, according to the legend, missed in Hell more than any other of the celestial joys—it has the stateliness and simplicity of those lilies of the field, of whom it was said that they toil not, neither do they spin; it has the purity of line of Greek sculpture, the inward radiance which reminds one of the sounds in Gluck's Elysium; besides this it is royal with the majesty of immense emotions expressed in concise utterance; and that particular achievement is a faculty which approaches the power of our masters, the great composers, who say without words what we try to say and fail. Your verse is majestic, noble, and pure, wistful, insinuating, and lovely; as sweet as honey, as clear-cut as the frieze of the Parthenon.

"And you, John Milton, I think of you, and the symphonies of Beethoven seem to beat their wings round me and to claim your verse as a brother. The pageant of your poems passes before me, from the spring-like blossom of the *Allegro* and the *Penseroso*, with their wayward footfall, their utterance which is inexpressibly joyous, even when speaking through the mask of youth's melancholy; from *Lycidas*, that pageant of embroidered loveliness, to the epics, with their thunders and their swords, their space and their visions, and the vast circumference that gives to the reader the sense of arduous adventure and long, long travel, till the closing elegy of the dead Samson, the most solemn and impressive funeral march ever put into words. The *Eroica* of literature.

"And I myself—I am dead, and therefore conceit for me is non-existent. Let me cheerfully admit that I wrote good verse. I understood the hearts of all men; and because I understood the hearts of men, of whatever nation and whatever race, I understood the Russian heart better than any of my countrymen. I loved my people for what they were, and as they were; and I told their story in the cadence of my words and in the lilt of my songs. In my verse you can hear the *Troika* circling, bewildered in the snowstorm. You can feel the shadow of Peter the Great; you can peer into the crystal of the heart of the Russian woman; you can hear my old nurse muttering the fairy tales that were told when Rurik came over the sea; you can see the angel with six wings putting the live coal on the lips of the inanimate prophet, when he lay like a husk in the desert, just as I set it to the lips of my country. You can watch in the silence of the night the sleepless soul gazing at the blurred and blotched scroll and the smeared chronicle of its deeds, powerless with all the tears in the world to wash away the written stain—and you can read in six short lines the inexpressible declaration of love of all the unhappy lovers in the world. Yes, we are all three of us great poets, and it would be difficult to apportion to us the exact meed of our praise, to find for each of us a perfectly fitting laurel wreath. But I ask you to cede the place of honour to Goethe in spite of this, because he wrote *Faust* and half a dozen lyrics. And even if he hadn't written *Faust* I should ask you to do so all the same—on account of the half a dozen lyrics. Because, gentlemen, those lyrics have

something in them beyond our range and beyond our power: Goethe was a man of science, say some, and therefore not a poet. But inspiration descended on that man of science like the rod of Moses on the rock, and out of that fastness of intellect, that mountain of mind, that cliff of wisdom, the waters flowed; and one drop of that water is more than all our fountains, although the rainbow plays in them and they reflect the sun. His came from a deeper mine: and the world, like a vulgar merchant or a simple child, whichever you will, knows that the brand of Goethe denotes a still more precious and valuable merchandise than the pearls of Racine, the sapphires of Milton, and the many-coloured beads of Pushkin. The world is right in the long run, gentlemen, for although it may stop its ears or listen to false gods, in the end it will re-echo the voice of God: let us therefore immediately cede the place of honour to Goethe."

Upon which I suppose Racine would have consented out of politeness to humour the barbarians, and Milton would have left the room in a passion. Now perhaps the reader, who is unfamiliar with Russian poetry, will think that in putting Pushkin in the same room with Goethe, Milton, and Racine, I have overrated his position. In that case, let him bear in mind one thing: only a born Russian can appreciate to the full the beauties of Pushkin, just as only a born Frenchman can appreciate to the full the beauties of Racine's verse, and only a born Englishman can appreciate to the full the beauties of Milton's verse. Talk to a Frenchman who has learnt English, and not known it from his childhood, of the melody of *Paradise Lost*, and it is like talking to a Chinaman of the melody of Beethoven, or to a European of the modulations of the tom-tom. Talk to an Englishman of the melody of Racine's verse, or rather read what Matthew Arnold says on the subject, and you will see that he does not even make a wild guess at what a Frenchman feels on the subject: he considers that the Alexandrine is a monotonous and cloying tumty-tumty instrument. But to a Frenchman the verse of Racine is infinitely *nuancé:* as varied and subtle in its melody as the verse of Milton is to an Englishman; and besides this, it touches in him all sorts of springs of deep emotion which the Englishman knows nothing of, but which he feels stirred in himself when he reads Milton.

For this reason it is of paramount importance to take

the opinion of Russians on Pushkin into consideration. Take Dostoievski's opinion. Dostoievski was a man whose range of sympathy was wide and whose capacity of feeling was intense; moreover, he was acquainted with the literature of Europe, and appreciated Racine as well as Goethe and Shakespeare. In the address that he read at the unveiling of Pushkin's monument at Moscow he speaks of Pushkin's all-embracing humanity. He singles out his capacity of understanding everything and everybody (which has already been discussed in the chapter on the Russian character) as being the unique and special gift of Providence to the Russian character.

He maintains that Pushkin's capacity of infinite comprehension is the proof that he is above all things a national poet.

"Dostoievski," writes Prince Volkonski, "qualifies Pushkin by a name which I find no other way of rendering than by forming a Greek word—*πανάνθρωπος*, to signify that he combined all human qualities, and therefore belonged to all nations, while at the same time his very universality appears as a specific national trait."

In one of his articles in which Dostoievski is talking of Pushkin's poetry and of its national quality, he hits the nail firmly and cleanly on the head in the following piece of criticism:—

"If a Russian does not understand Pushkin, he has no right to call himself a Russian. He understood the Russian people and divined their significance with a profundity and breadth of comprehension such as nobody had ever shown before. I am not speaking now of the universality of his genius, and his power of assimilating the most widely divergent spiritual and mental characteristics of European nations, and thereby testifying to the humanity and the universality of the Russian soul, and thereby announcing the part which the Russian soul is destined to play in the world. . . . I am speaking now solely of Pushkin's love of the Russian people. It was an all-embracing love, which up to then nobody had given him. 'Do not love me, but love *mine*' (that is to say, love what I love). That is what the people says when it wishes to test the sincerity of your love. Every member of the gentry, especially if he is human and enlightened, can love, that is to say, sympathize with the people on account of its want, poverty, and suffering. But what the people need is not that you should love it for its sufferings, but for itself; and what does 'love it for itself' signify? 'If you

love what I love, honour what I honour.' That is what it means, and that is what the people will answer to you; and if it be otherwise, the man of the people will never count you as his own, however great your distress may be on his account. He will look at you askance, charm you never so wisely with words of sympathy. Pushkin gave to the Russian people just the very love that it craved; and he did not worry about how one should love the people; he did not get ready and learn: he suddenly showed himself to the people. He bowed down before popular truth. He accepted the people's truth as his truth. In spite of the people's vices, in spite of their evil and deadly habits, he was able to discern the existence and the greatness of the soul of the people, at a time when they entirely escaped almost everybody's notice, and he set up the popular ideal in his heart as his own ideal."

Dostoievski further adds (I am condensing his remarks, as a full quotation would occupy too much space) that this was at a moment when the enlightened and humane popular sympathizers considered the people to be no better than wild beasts. Pushkin's whole thesis was that with exceptions of individual instances the Russian people were not and never had been slaves, in spite of centuries of slavery.[1] He recognized the intrinsic quality of self-respect in the Russian people, which they proved by the manly dignity of their behaviour, when they were liberated from serfdom. The professed sympathizers with the people, who in reality despised them, had expected them to appal the world by a violent explosion, as soon as they should be set free. "Pushkin," he says finally, "loved the people not only for its sufferings. You take pity on suffering, and pity often goes side by side with contempt. Pushkin loved all that the people loved; he honoured all that the people honoured. He was not a condescending and humane gentleman taking pity on the Muzhik on account of his bitter lot; but he assimilated and took upon himself, through his heart, the very nature of the people, penetrating into its intimate being, almost transforming himself into its image."

In fact, Pushkin, according to Dostoievski, achieved exactly what Peter the Great failed to do—in the case of the people

[1] "In spite of the period of serfdom through which he has passed, the Russian Muzhik is not servile; he thinks of God and the Tsar in one category, and of the rest of the world as more or less equal in another."—Sir Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*.

as a whole. Nobody so easily and so naturally as Peter the Great put himself on the same fôoting as a peasant or an artisan in *individual* cases; but on the whole and in general he took no heed of the popular sentiment, and ran counter to it, and thereby earned the title of Antichrist. Dostoievski is not alone in his opinion. Gogol, in his *Arabesques*, writes:—

"Only the man to whom Russia is a fatherland can understand those pictures of Pushkin which are saturated with the Russian spirit."

And again:—

"At the name of Pushkin we are impelled to cross ourselves, as it were, at the thought of our national poet: for no other Russian has an equal claim to the title. Pushkin is an extraordinary, perhaps a unique manifestation of the genius of the Russian people. He is a Russian in his final state of development, as he may possibly appear two hundred years hence. In him the Russian soul, language, and temperament are reflected as clearly as a landscape is reproduced in the convex surface of a field-glass."

And Turgeniev, a severe critic of Russian literature, in speaking of Pushkin, says:—

"He fuses the Russian genius and the Russian receptivity into one harmonious whole, so that his work is saturated with the very essence of the Russian nationality."

And again:—

"We find in Pushkin's poems that great emancipating force which ennobles and elevates all who come into contact with it."

It will be clear from the foregoing quotations that the Russians in any case consider Pushkin to be a great poet and a national poet. What, then, it will be asked, is the nature of his poetry? What kind of poetry is it? What and whom is it like?

The only adequate answer to such questions is to be found in the works themselves; but since quotation in the original is out of the question, and quotation of translations, however skilful they may be, gives no sort of idea of the beauty and charm of his writing, I will try to indicate a few of the characteristics of his work by comparison.

In the first place, Pushkin's work has a quality in common with the work of all Russian writers: an innate realism; it is,

like the Russian nature, rooted in reality. I have written on this peculiar characteristic of Russian poetry at some length in a short book called *Landmarks of Russian Literature.* I will not repeat what I have already said there. Suffice it to say that Pushkin's work, like that of all the Russian poets, is anchored to the earth; it does not soar into fantastic regions. It is never " pinnacled dim in the intense inane." It has nothing in common with the work of lyrists such as Victor Hugo, Coleridge, Shelley, Browning, and Swinburne on the one hand, or with that of dramatists such as Marlowe, Webster, and Ford. There is nothing extravagant, rebellious, demonic, uncouth, audacious, or rhapsodical about Pushkin's work. He belongs to the school of Praxiteles, and not to that of Michelangelo; he is akin to Mozart, and not to Wagner; to Constable, rather than to Turner. His poetry is probably nearer to German than to English poetry, and it translates admirably into German. My advice to the student who is unacquainted with Russian, and who wishes to have an idea of Pushkin, is to read him in German.

Pushkin underwent the Byronic influence like everybody else of his time; but he underwent it and shed it like a skin. His poetry is never really Byronic in spirit, although it has certain qualities which remind one of Byron; directness, for instance, and an eye for the great sights of nature.

In the second place, resulting from his receptivity, his work is wide and varied in range of subject and range of feeling. He will write a Polish ballad, a folk-song, a sonnet, an elegy, an epigram, an epic tale, a patriotic invective, a song reflecting a simple landscape, a modern novel in verse, and a lyric embodying a Biblical vision with the same ease. His most famous work is *Evgenie Oniégin,* which is a modern novel in verse.

His psychology is amazing.

" Pushkin," says Dostoievski, " created two types, Oniégin and Tatiana, who sum up in themselves the most intimate secrets of Russian psychology; with the utmost conceivable artistic skill they represent its past and present, and indicate its future in traits of inimitable beauty."

Of his shorter poems, among many masterpieces, there is one which embodies the vision which is told in the sixth chapter of

Isaiah: the vision of a six-winged seraph appearing to a prophet lying inanimate in the desert. This is generally considered to be unrivalled in Russian literature. It towers among his poems: wide in suggestion, close in utterance; a picture and a piece of music, indescribably majestic, sonorous, and musical. In this great poem Pushkin seems to have done better than his best; to have snatched an accent that was greater than his own; to be sounding a clarion which an angel had momentarily mislaid.

It is as concise as Milton's "Blest Pair of Sirens." It consists of thirty eight- and nine-syllabled lines. It has a Dantesque compression of diction, and it is as tremendous in its cumulative effect as a chorale of Bach's.

But in no other poem does Pushkin attain to this height of inspiration. It is different *in kind* from his other work. He touched these tremendous chords once, and once only. And if Pushkin had written this poem and this only, and had died immediately afterwards, the world would have justly considered that it had heard the overture of the work of one of its very greatest poets, and was on the verge of receiving another Dante. As it is, the single poem does not give him a chance to rank higher, because he only reached this height once.

The chief quality of Pushkin's work in general, besides the naturalness and the foundation of realism, and the sensitive psychology which have already been mentioned, is the sense of form which is as manifest in the construction of his poems as in their phrasing. His diction and language have the consummateness of perfect simplicity. You cannot parody Pushkin. He has no style. Just as good manners consist in the absence of visible manners, so does the highest style consist in the utter absence of obvious visible style. Pushkin has this absence of style which is the highest style; he is a consummate artist in the concealment of art. Everything is there because it has got to be there. You could not change a word in a poem of Pushkin's without upsetting the balance of the whole. This is what makes his poems untranslatable. They have, moreover, an unobtrusive grace of outline; his work is clear-cut without being hard. It is liquid and fluid, and, above all things, plastic.

He makes a telling and cunning use of the conciseness of the Russian language, of its declined past passive participles, and

gerunds and gerundives, of its instrumental case. It is this, perhaps, which gives to his work a Greek quality; his short love poems remind one of the Greek anthology, and of the best things in it. They are perfectly simple; the words are the transparent skin of the thought. A good Greek scholar might make some interesting translations of Pushkin's short love lyrics into Greek. They are made of the same stuff as the Greek epigrams of the best period.

A master of many styles and supreme in all, Pushkin had one quality which distinguishes him from those purely literary poets who remain literary, however greatly they may be inspired, such as Carducci, Leconte de Lisle, or Heredias; he can strike the popular note, he can be familiar and homely, and speak with the voice of the people that croons its fairy tales to its children. His ballads are real ballads, his fairy tales contain the quintessence of the popular Russian outlook and accent. That is to say, he combines the qualities of Béranger and Callimachus —of Burns and Racine.

What is there lacking, then, in this universal poet, this infinitely receptive plastic artist, who is so consummate a master of his trade, whose masterpieces are as natural as nature, as folk-song, as a peasant's conversation, and as melodious as the song of the blackbird? Why do we hesitate to class him with Goethe? Why is he not a still greater poet than he is? Why cannot the Russians say, "The English have Shakespeare, the Italians Dante, and we have Pushkin, and he is as great as they"?

I do not fancy that the most fervent worshippers of Pushkin would put him on the same level with Dante and Shakespeare, and I doubt if they would rank him with Goethe. I have, in fact, asked the most enthusiastic admirer of Pushkin I know, whether he ranked Pushkin with Goethe. He answered that although he thought Pushkin incomparable, he considered there were certain chords sounded by Goethe which Pushkin never touched. The reason, as I have already indicated, is certainly not that Pushkin's work is less well known in Europe; the Russian language is far less known than other languages, and Russia itself is less well known than other countries to the rest of Europe, but this does not alter the fact that the language is beautiful and the country is large. If Russian were as well known a language as German, Pushkin would probably be more

admired than all the German poets, with the exception of Goethe; and, with the exception of Dante, he certainly equals, and greatly surpasses, in width of range and variety of notes, all the poets of Italy.

No, the reason will be found in his work and in himself. There was something lacking in his soul. A flaw, a lacuna, a defect in his character, which prevented his being as great as he ought to have been.

If you read any Russian book, study, or article about Pushkin, and any English study either—which will probably reflect the Russian view—you are certain to be struck by one thing: they all talk of Pushkin's sad *fate*; of his having been the victim of circumstance, a prisoner to the conventions of the world; a martyr to the claims of society. They represent him as a poet whose genius was stifled by the narrowness, vanity, and futility of the life of the upper class in St. Petersburg. He is represented (*a*) as having been persecuted by the censorship. For instance, Mrs. Newmarch, in her interesting book on Russian poetry, writes: "Now began that long series of petty annoyances, restrictions, and reprimands which puts the poet's life on a level with that of a ticket-of-leave man, and led to the disenchantment and acquiescent languor which, as Dobroliubov observes, is the final stage in the career of almost every Russian poet." Again, he is represented (*b*) as the victim of a conspiracy on the part of society to stifle his genius, and finally to ruin him. "Skabichevski shows," writes Mrs. Newmarch, "how a coalition was formed against him by the fashionable world." And it is further said that the duel in which he met his death was a trap, prepared by the "cunningly directed friction" of anonymous letters made by the same coalition. "Pushkin, being sensitive," Mrs. Newmarch continues, "and, moreover, the child of an age that recognized but one remedy for outraged honour, *fell an easy victim into the trap prepared for him.* He felt obliged to challenge Dantes (a guardsman who had flirted with his wife)."

This explanation of Pushkin's conduct, which I have quoted from Mrs. Newmarch's book, sums up the general opinion which prevailed in that part of intellectual Russia which admired Pushkin (there was another section which despised Pushkin in his work, but we need not go into these literary quarrels) from the time of his death onwards. It is by no means extraordinary

that such an opinion prevailed, because it was founded on the things which Pushkin said about himself in his poems.

The only remarkable thing is that this view should have been almost universally and unreservedly accepted and taken for granted without questioning; that nobody should have asked themselves whether it really did fit the facts of Pushkin's life. For as soon as we look into the matter, we find that it is not only difficult to reconcile this explanation with the facts of Pushkin's life, but it is harder still to reconcile it with common sense.

If it is true that Pushkin was a prisoner to the claims and conventions of the fashionable world, one is at once led to inquire whether there was any material or moral obligation which compelled him to remain in the fashionable world, if he felt that that world was obnoxious to his soul and to its expression. Now, if we look into his life, we find that there was no such obligation. If he felt that society was stifling his genius, was there anything to prevent his turning his back on society?

The ordinary catch-words of Russian intellectual criticism, with regard to Pushkin, seem to imply that he was in the position of a convict who is serving a sentence of penal servitude, against his will, and in chains. But the truth is that nobody passed a sentence on him, except himself. It may be said that the fate of Pushkin, which led him to fritter away his energies in St. Petersburg, was a sad one; but then it should be added that his destiny was not a series of outward, separate, and independent blows, falling upon him as domestic troubles fell upon Œdipus, but it was woven by his soul, just as it was Macbeth's sickly imagination and fevered ambition that made him into a king and a murderer. It is argued that Pushkin was forbidden by the Emperor to go abroad, like Byron and Shelley—that he was, as it were, banished to his fatherland; but this restriction has in any case the advantage of keeping him, like Antæus, chained to the source of his strength and his inspiration; and to talk of an enforced stay in his fatherland and in his home,[1] as having the bitterness of exile is absurd. In any case, he might have lived in the country, like Wordsworth and Tolstoi; in the suburbs, like Swinburne; or he might have lived in St. Petersburg, as Browning lived in London, and gone out to dinner, giving his evening clothes to society, and keeping his soul in its own starry

[1] Or his compulsory visit to the Caucasus

space. It is obvious that whatever chains Pushkin wore were of his own forging; and the theory that it was otherwise, that he was the victim of a blind and cruel stroke on the part of fortune, which condemned him to live in a moral climate destructive of his genius, grew out of the poetical interpretation of his own failings, and was crystallized into a legend by his contemporaries. The legend was further confirmed and hardened by generations of intellectuals, who had an almost insane habit of political bias, and a tendency of dragging in politics in season and out of season, and who were unable to look at any matter save through the glass of a political creed.

Thus arose the theory, the legend of Pushkin's fate. It is not extraordinary that it was confirmed and reflected by foreign opinion, but it is extraordinary that nobody in Russia seemed to see that one touch of common sense might cause it to crumble into pieces. It is extraordinary that nobody realized to what an extent they were belittling Pushkin's genius by such a theory. The touch was given not many years ago by one of the most brilliant and original of Russian thinkers and writers, Vladimir Soloviev, the philosopher. In an article called "The Fate of Pushkin," he discusses this very subject. I will try to condense and make an abstract of the main points of his argument. This is what he says:—

"In Pushkin, according to his own testimony, there were two different and separate beings: the inspired priest of Apollo, and the nullest of all the null children of the world. His youth was spent in vanity, and Pushkin calls the poems of his youth the pampered echoes of folly, sloth and passion."

But when he reached the age of thirty his soul felt the need of turning to better things. He understood that in his own words the service of the Muse is incompatible with the pursuit of vanity; that beauty is only the outward and visible shape of what is good and what is true, and he felt that his soul was in jeopardy: that his creative gift and his higher aspirations were in danger of being overcome and stifled by his rebellious and lawless passions, by the strength of his lower instincts. If Pushkin had lived in the Middle Ages, Soloviev argues, he might, in order to get the better of his baser passions, have retired into a monastery. As it was, he lived at the beginning

of the nineteenth century, and he married and became the father of a family. In so doing, he set a limit to those instincts and passions which threatened to destroy his poetical gift. But, at the same time, he increased his social ties, and in binding himself more closely to the society to which he belonged, he laid himself open to a new and more subtle temptation. Since he elected to remain in society, and since he was convinced that the service of the Muse is incompatible with vanity, he was bound to establish his obligations towards society.

But Pushkin refused to separate the consciousness of his genius and of his high calling, which he was perfectly right in recognizing, from a trivial personal *amour-propre* and self-conceit. If, because of his genius, he excelled other men, and was justly conscious of his superiority, so in experiencing a self-opinionated and petty resentment against others he fell from his high position, and by entering the arena of petty quarrel with his fellow-creatures he lowered himself to their level, and his resentment lost its justification. In fact, Pushkin let *amour-propre* pilot his soul, and he attempted to justify the fact by the consciousness of his high vocation.

Pushkin was deeply religious; scepticism was to him a passing whim, a fleeting fashion, which he soon discarded. In the consciousness of his genius and in his Christian faith, Pushkin had a double support; in spite of this, he wavered between a proud contempt of the society which surrounded him and a petty resentment against it, which he expressed in venomous epigrams and personal sallies in which there was nothing genial and nothing Christian. And here, says Soloviev, we have the true key of the tragedy of 1837 (the year Pushkin perished in a duel).

The opinion of Pushkin himself, and of nearly all Russian critics except those who have a *parti pris* of hostility towards him, an opinion which is reflected in European and English criticism, is, as we have said, that the "world" was hostile to Pushkin; that he perished owing to "malign fate"; that he was the victim of society.

Now Soloviev proceeds to prove that this is not true. Society, he argues, is hostile towards those who wish to reform it. Pushkin evinced no such desire; and, indeed, he had not the nature of a reformer. He resembled Goethe rather than Socrates;

and the attitude of the official and social world towards him was more like the attitude of Germany to the Olympian of Weimar than that of the Athenian democracy towards Socrates (and Socrates lived amidst this democracy till he was seventy).

Soloviev asks (and he may well ask), what did the world fail to recognize in Pushkin, and how was he persecuted? Was it his genius that was not recognized? Was he a J. F. Millet? A Chatterton?

In the whole history of the world's literature there is scarcely an example of a great writer who was so swiftly and so universally recognized in his own country. He was the rare example of a prophet acclaimed by his own people, and in his own country, immediately and universally. Soloviev further argues that to talk of persecution in this case is to dally with words. If he was obliged to live in the country (in his own home) for several years, what, he exclaims, about the exile of Dante? And the bitterest words in all poëtry ring in my ears as I read his argument:—

"Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
Più caramente . . . . . .
. . . . . .
Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle
Lo scendere e'l salir per l'altrui scale."

No, surely Soloviev is right. It would have been sheer mockery if Pushkin had written in this spirit. What about the prison of Camoëns, asks Soloviev, and the penal servitude of Dostoievski? What about Shelley, one might ask, whose children were taken from him? And what about the *matress-grave* of Heine? What about Mozart? The only thing Pushkin had to suffer from was the censorship, to which all Russian literature was subject at that time, and which to a great soul should not prove a fetter. And in any case, Soloviev points out, and with reason, had Pushkin lived in the England of that day, he would have suffered far more from society on account of the excesses and extravagances of his youth (as was proved in the case of Byron) than he did from the Government in Russia.

Besides, in that very world, and in that very society, he had a multitude not only of devoted but of distinguished friends and admirers, among whom were Karamzin, Velgurski, Viazemski, Zhukovski, Gogol, Bariatinski, and Pletnev. Rarely has a

Russian writer (or any writer anywhere) been surrounded by so brilliant and so sympathetic a circle.

As for his duel, Soloviev does not even discuss the question of its being a trap—he probably considered this to be too palpably absurd—but he maintains that it was not the result of a blind blow of fortune, but the fruit of an internal storm that was raging in Pushkin's heart. There had already been a question of his fighting a duel with Heckeren-Dantes, and Pushkin had given the Emperor Nicholas his word of honour that a duel should not take place without his being informed of it. Pushkin then received an anonymous letter, and being wrongly convinced that Heckeren was the author of it, he wrote him a violent letter, which made a duel inevitable : he broke his word to the Emperor, for he omitted to inform him. A letter was found after his death destined for the Emperor, explaining his reasons for the duel ; but it was never sent. Pushkin did not die until three days after his duel, and during those three days he did not complain of his " fate." He at the last saw clearly ; he asked that no man should avenge his death ; he forgave his enemy, and said that he wished to die like a Christian.

" It is only those," says Soloviev, " who out of a great man wish to create for themselves a little idol, who attribute to him in his last moments, when the approach of death has cleared his mind and cleansed his soul, the idea that he was a victim to fate on account of his duel."

Soloviev's conclusion is very briefly as follows. All the various roads by which men who are called to moral regeneration eventually attain it are in reality only two : the road of inward transformation, by which man attains to true self-control, or the road of a vital catastrophe, which liberates the soul from the burden of its passions.

Pushkin, by surrendering blindly to anger, chose the second. And that is the whole " fate " of Pushkin ; his destiny was not an unhappy one, since it led him to the highest of all the goals of mankind—final spiritual regeneration.

I think what has now been said is sufficiently clear and sufficiently substantiated to show that it is absurd to consider Pushkin the victim of any external catastrophe, or of any blind stroke of fortune, or of any cruel lot. He was the victim of no one but himself and his own passions. This is the true tragedy, if you

will; that he perished in a duel in 1837, at the age of thirty-eight, that his career was prematurely cut short is not a tragedy. If he had lived to be a hundred, he could not have done more for Russian literature than he had done already. The tragedy of Pushkin's fate was enacted when his behaviour revealed the inward flaw in his nature, and showed that he was not only "passion's slave," but that he was sometimes petty passion's slave: that he was the bondsman of his irritability, of the petty side of his nature, of a sensitive *amour-propre* and an unworthy and baseless resentment. Soloviev puts his finger on the sore place when he says that Pushkin considered his honour to be in jeopardy because he had received an anonymous letter, but that he did not feel it to be affected when he broke his word of honour to the Emperor. And it is owing to this moral flaw, this lack of control over what he himself knew to be unworthy of him, that as a poet he does not rank even still higher than he does; that he is not with Dante and Shakespeare; that one hesitates to class him with Goethe.

It must not be thought that I wish to subject him to a narrow or hypocritical standard of morality. I do not mean to say that Pushkin would have been a greater poet had he been more virtuous; but I do wish to say that he is less a great poet than the greater poets, not because of his moral blemishes—they might have been a million times more numerous and a million times more dark than they were—but because of a flaw in his soul, owing to which he confused the essential with the non-essential, the great with the petty, the true with the false, gold with tinsel; and it is just this lack of spiritual discrimination which makes us sometimes feel in his poems the absence of that complete emancipation from all that is secondary, that untrammelled vision and breadth of soul which mark the work of the greatest poets of all.

I should not like to take leave of Pushkin by dwelling on his limitations. I should like to finish on a positive note of praise. If people say that Pushkin is overrated, do not believe them. It is impossible to overrate the excellence of his work, just as it is impossible to overrate the music of Mozart or the statues of Praxiteles. There may be profounder music than Mozart's, there may be—and there certainly is—finer sculpture than Praxiteles' Hermes, and there is finer poetry than Pushkin's in

the world; but there is none which displays a diviner, a more God-gifted ease, a purer outline, a more spontaneous melody, a more impeccable form, a closer and more inseparable harmony between the thought and its musical expression. Pushkin may not be one of the greatest poets of the world; but he was a citizen of the world, and it is this which makes him the greatest and most characteristic of all the Russian poets.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS

DURING the reign of the Emperor Nicholas, no important step, as we have said, occurred in the internal evolution of Russia. The reign was marked by two external wars and one civil war: the war against Turkey, which was concluded in 1829 by a Treaty of Adrianople, according to which all that Russia gained was the right of interfering on behalf of the Orthodox Christians in Turkey, and the harbours of Poti and Anapa on the Black Sea; the Crimean War, and the Polish insurrection of 1831.

With regard to the Crimean War, it is interesting to look back on the negotiations that preceded it. Lord Aberdeen's policy, which was so much blamed at the time, now seems a piece of statesmanlike foresight, and some of the Emperor Nicholas' proposals to the English Ambassador read like prophecies. It will be remembered, for instance, that he suggested that England should take Egypt.

Time very soon showed that the Crimean War was fruitless in its results as far as England was concerned, for in 1870 the Treaty of Paris was proved to be a dead letter.

Although the reign of Nicholas I was not distinguished by any inward change of importance, it is remarkable for the great literary outburst which distinguished it. Besides Pushkin, Russia's greatest poet, the epoch was further made glorious by its second great poet, Lermontov (1814–41), a lyric poet of the first order, who wrote several poems that have become part and parcel of the Russian language, and what are probably the finest pictures of nature in the Russian language. Besides these two great poets, and several others of a minor order, such as Koltsov (1809–42), we have the father of the Russian realistic novel and

the greatest of Russian humorists and satirists, Nicolas Gogol (1809–52). The Emperor Nicholas died during the Crimean War of 1855, leaving the emancipation of the serfs as a legacy to his son Alexander.

In the preceding chapters we have already seen that serfdom was a late product in Russia, arising from the binding of the peasant to the soil. We have also seen that this bondage was not the outcome of a sudden despotic act on the part of the Government, but the recognition by legislation of a state of things which had already existed for some time. We have seen that legislation became necessary in order to avert economic disaster, which was threatened first by the migration of the peasants from Central Russia to the southern and eastern Steppes, as the Russian kingdom was enlarged by conquest, and secondly, by the tendency of the peasants to concentrate in the estates of the richer landlords, thereby ruining the smaller landlords. We have seen that the legislation which bound the peasant to the soil was a gradual process, just as the process through which, from being bound to the soil, the peasant became a serf over whom his master had almost unlimited rights was gradual also.

We will now turn to the emancipation of the serfs. I have already discussed the attitude of Catherine II with regard to it. During her reign the question of emancipation was raised and discussed by her with Voltaire; and also by Beardé l'Abaye Marmontel and the Society of Political Economy in St. Petersburg.

We have seen that all this came to nothing; in fact, the number of serfs during her reign and that of her son was enormously increased, and in 1788 the bondage to the soil was introduced into Little Russia and the Ukraine (the modern Government of Kharkov).

The first step in the direction of emancipation was taken in the reign of the Emperor Paul. The Emperor Paul carried out a measure by which the peasants were only obliged to work for their landlord three days in the week. They could devote the rest of the time to their own work.

N. P. Semenev, in his authoritative work on the emancipation of the peasants, says that this measure touched the vital spot; but that, unfortunately, a lack of control, which should check the

practical working of it, prevented it from being effective. The next steps towards ameliorating the position of the serf were taken in the reign of the Emperor Alexander I.

The Emperor Alexander was strongly in favour of emancipation. He supported a law giving the landlords the right to liberate their serfs, and even to grant them land if they paid for it. The law passed in 1803, and 47,000 serfs were shortly afterwards enfranchised, and became a separate class.

In 1819 the serfs were emancipated in the three Baltic provinces, and the peasant obtained personal freedom on condition of giving up his land to his landlord. Napoleon had already carried out a similar reform in Poland in 1812. And in this same year the Petersburg Society of Political Economists offered a prize of 2000 roubles (£200) to the author of the best essay on the relative advantages of free and servile labour. The majority of authors who sent in papers to the Society expressed the opinion that the emancipation of the serf, provided that he should be allowed to keep his land, would be of great advantage to the landlord himself.

The nobility of Tula, Riazan, Dünaburg, and St. Petersburg petitioned the Emperor Nicholas to establish local committees with the object of framing a draft of a new Emancipation Act.

The nobility desired the establishment of a class similar to that of English agricultural labourers; but the peasants were against any change which would lessen their hold on the land; and their feeling expressed itself in 1812 by a rising in the Government of Pensa, and by another in 1826. "Land and Liberty" was the watchword of both these risings. The Emperor Nicholas consequently gave up all idea of emancipation which should not be simultaneous with the endowment of the peasant with land. He did not himself attempt the execution of this radical measure, although he saw that it must come soon, but he left the task as a legacy to his son. At the same time he made two changes in the condition of the serf: He made him into a perpetual tenant of small plots of the manorial land; and in 1842 he ordered the establishment in each manor of a registry called "Inventory," in which the payments made in kind and money by the serfs to the landlord were inscribed, so that no further sums should be levied in the future.

The Emperor Alexander II came to the throne with the firm purpose of carrying out the project which Catherine II, the Emperor Alexander I, and his father, the Emperor Nicholas, had all of them meditated. At the same time he was equally determined to carry out his project solely with the consent and the co-operation of the nobility. He at once showed his appreciation of the nobility by consenting to the abolition of the Inventory I have mentioned above, which was highly unpopular among the landlords, and to the substitution of a new system drawn up by the Council of Empire.

In the meantime rumours began to spread rapidly and wildly concerning the Emperor's intention of emancipating the serfs; this naturally caused great excitement both among the landlords and the peasantry, an excitement which found expression in a number of local risings. At the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris, in 1856, the Emperor took advantage of his stay in Moscow to receive the representatives of the nobility of the Government of Moscow, and he made them the following speech:—

"I have heard, gentlemen, that rumours have been current among you with regard to my intention of abolishing the bondage of the peasant. In order to refute various statements which are devoid of foundation, on so important a subject, I consider it necessary to declare to you that I have no intention of doing this now. But you naturally are yourselves aware that the existing method of owning souls [human beings are counted by "souls" in Russia] cannot remain unchanged. It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait until it will be abolished by a movement from below. I ask you, gentlemen, to consider how this can best be carried out."

In the meantime the Emperor took counsel with his ministers with regard to the question, and especially with the Minister of the Interior, S. S. Lanskoi, and he ordered that all documents and reports, the work of all the various committees which had ever been held on the subject of the peasant, and which existed in the various Ministries and Government institutions, should be collected in the Ministry of the Interior, and that Lanskoi should draw up a report on them.

At first, however, the nobility failed to respond to the Emperor's appeal. They declared their inability to understand on what lines the Emperor intended to construct his plan, and they con-

fessed themselves incapable of devising any project themselves. Such was the state of things towards the end of 1856.

The Emperor then established a private committee, of which he himself was the President, and which included the President of the Council of Empire, Prince Orlov, the Minister of the Interior, and others, with the object of considering the question of serfdom. It was opened in January, 1857. The members of this private Committee considered the Emperor's project to be premature, and likely to have dangerous consequences; they hindered rather than helped the work, and consequently little headway was made. On the other hand, the Grand Duke Constantine, the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, the Minister of the Interior, Lanskoi, and his collaborators, Levshin and N. A. Miliutin, were all ardent supporters of the project.

The Emperor returned, after an absence of some months abroad, in 1857, and was highly discontented with the slow progress which had been made by the Committee; he immediately appointed the Grand Duke Constantine a member of the Committee. In August it was at last decided by the Committee that the condition of the peasantry must be bettered, but that the reform must be carried out gradually and prudently.

The next step in the matter was due to the intervention of the Lithuanian nobles who were favourable to the idea of emancipation. At the end of October, 1857, the Governor-General of Vilna, Nasimov, arrived in St. Petersburg, bearing a petition to the Emperor from the nobility of the north-western Governments of Vilna, Kovno, and Grodno, in which they expressed the desire that their serfs should be liberated, without receiving the land. The petition was answered by the Imperial rescript of 20th November, 1857, in which was announced the establishment of local commissions in the above-mentioned Governments, for the drafting of such measures as would make emancipation possible. It was also stated that the liberated serfs should retain their homesteads (*usadebnaia osiedlost*) and a certain quantity of land belonging to them.

In the beginning of 1857, the nobility of St. Petersburg had presented to the Emperor a similar address, and in December, 1857, the nobility of Nizhni-Novgorod followed suit; in January, 1858, the nobility of Moscow presented a petition in which they expressed their "entire readiness to co-operate with the lofty intentions of their august Sovereign," and in which they asked his

permission to open local commissions. From March to October petitions were forwarded from the nobility of the larger provinces, and local commissions consisting of noblemen were formed in order to draft the outlines of the reform. On January 8, 1858, a Public Central Board was instituted, to which the drafts of the local commissions were to be sent, to be further examined, summarized, and co-ordinated. The Central Board was called "the Principal Committee on the Peasant Question."

From the moment this Central Committee was instituted—all the members of the previous private committee were appointed to serve on it—emancipation was merely a question of time and of degree. It was now decided in principle that the reform should be carried out: what remained to be settled was the shape it should take and the means by which it should be executed.

Two further committees were also instituted: one for drafting the project of reform, the other for elaborating the necessary financial measures which it entailed. The whole of this work, and all the drafting committees, were placed under the control of General Rostovtsov, a keen advocate of emancipation. The meetings of the local committees proved a decisive landmark in Russian history, for apart from the importance of the work in hand, they brought together men representing every shade of social position, and every shade of political opinion, from the most obscure landowners to the most illustrious names in Russia, from officials of the lowest rank and subaltern officers to the men occupying the highest positions, at court, in the army, and in the civil service, from men who scarcely knew how to read and write, to professors and academicians; they also included violent partisans on both sides. The discussion of the question by the local committees, therefore, affords almost the first example of elective bodies dealing with a question of paramount importance to the State. During the epoch in which the committees met, the character of the project of reform underwent many considerable changes. This was due to the strength of public opinion, which, during this period, found expression in the Press. The part played by the Press was important; with the exception of one newspaper, it unanimously advocated not only the abolition of serfdom, but the endowment of the peasant with land.

So once again the emancipation reform, the manner in which it was drafted and modified during the process of drafting, affords us striking evidence that at the crucial moments of Russian history it is public opinion which is ultimately the real and sovereign power. This is all the more striking in an epoch when the liberty of the Press did not officially exist.

For instance, at the beginning of the movement, the opinion of Katkov, one of the most famous of Russian journalists, the editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, and afterwards a leader in the Slavophil movement, conflicted so sharply with those of the Government that he was obliged to put an abrupt end to a series of articles on the condition of the serfs, which he was publishing, at that time, in the *Russian Courier*. A little later the views of the Government changed, and writers whose articles had been suppressed were looked upon as its allies.

"The Russian Bureaucracy," says Professor Kovalievski, in commenting, in 1891, on this very situation, "begins as a rule by suppressing all that lies in its way, and then finding no other issue, it adopts the line of conduct which it has recently condemned. A foreigner who has no notion of this mode of procedure must find great difficulty in understanding how it happens that in a country where no freedom of the Press is recognized . . . the Press, nevertheless, has more than once exercised a decisive influence on the course of politics. . . . *In Russia, as well as everywhere else, the true and lasting power is that of public opinion, and of those who know how to influence it.* Periods in which the Government acts contrary to public opinion occur from time to time. They are very harmful to those who dare to remain faithful to their opinions. For a while nothing is heard of but the need of suppression both of opinions and of those who publicly profess them. But time passes and the Government begins to reap the fruits of its own sowing. At every step it takes, it finds on the part of those it governs nothing but ill-will, a hidden but profound mistrust. As soon as it feels that it is losing all hold on the minds and hearts of the people, it is the first to condemn what it has recently praised. Some fine morning everybody is startled to hear that the very men who had done their best to render impossible certain ideas are now drawing their inspiration from those same ideas." [1]

[1] *Modern Customs and Ancient Laws in Russia.* Maxim Kovalievski. Nutt, 1891.

There were two other important factors in the case: the Emperor and the nobility.

During the whole period in which the project of reform was debated, the Emperor never swerved from his unalterable purpose: to carry out the work to the end. In August, 1858, he visited the interior of Russia, in order to investigate the condition of the peasants personally and on the spot, and to express his purpose once more. He visited Vologda, Tver, Nizhni-Novgorod, Vladimir, Moscow, Smolensk, and Vilna; and in each of these places he addressed the local gentry and appealed to them to lend their aid and co-operation. His journey, and the expression of his intentions, acted as a powerful stimulus on the march of affairs. He realized that he would not have to face any systematic and organized opposition on the part of the nobility, but that there were many enthusiastic partisans for reform among that class.

The nobility were unanimously agreed as to the necessity of abolishing serfdom; but they disagreed widely as to the means by which the reform should be carried out. In many modern Russian books on the subject the story is related as if there had been a long and bitter struggle between manorial lords determined not to yield an inch of their control over the persons of their peasants, and a few enlightened journalists. But as they also admit the fact that the committees charged with carrying out the reform consisted of nobles who were in some cases the owners of large estates, this view of the question seems to the impartial student untenable and void of foundation, quite apart from the extremely simple fact that had the nobility been opposed tooth and nail to the reform, it would have been impossible to carry it out, from above, and the only way it could have happened, in that case, would have been from below, by a revolution. We have seen that from the very outset the Emperor had decided that the experience of the past had made this fact patent, and he was resolved to carry out the reform with the co-operation of the nobility, or not at all. Where the nobility disagreed was on the land question.

In the Imperial rescript by which the Emperor had answered the petition of the nobility of Tver in November, 1857, it had been laid down that the nobility should *retain their right of ownership over the whole land*; and that the peasants should

receive their homesteads, which they should pay for in a given period of time; these should then become their property. Besides their homesteads they should have a certain quantity of land which they should pay for either in rent or in work for the landlord.

Owing to the Government's recognition of the nobility's rights of ownership over the whole of the land, the question became the cause of heated disputes and sharp differences of opinion. The nobility considered that their right to own the whole land had been safeguarded and confirmed; at the same time, the greater part of them admitted that the peasant could not live without land, and that it would be necessary to settle on the freed peasants a part of the land which belonged to the landowners. Public opinion was divided on the question of what arrangement should be made, and two widely different courses were advocated by members of the principal committee, the Press, and public opinion at large.

One section of the public advocated measures which would encourage the development of private property, and lead to the establishment of small holdings, and among these were Katkov, the journalist, and Vernadski, the political economist; another section of public opinion, which included the Slavophils and the Socialists (the extreme right and the extreme left of public opinion), advocated the maintenance of the communal ownership of land with its periodical redistribution. The two principles round which public opinion was grouped were practically, therefore, the Socialist and the Individualist.

Another source of dispute was the amount of remuneration which the landlord was to receive, not for the loss of his rights over his former serfs, but for the land he would be obliged to cede. Around all these questions there were heated disputes between the representatives of the nobility and the Central Drafting Committees. In the Central Drafting Committee, Peter Shuvalov, Apraxin, and Posen were opposed to the expropriation of the land.

In looking back on these events and in reading books on the subject which were written not longer than ten years ago, it is curious to see what a striking change has taken place not only in public opinion, but in the opinion of the specialists. Principles which were considered as bearing in themselves the seeds of ruin

are now advocated as the sole means of salvation. Semenov, in his book on the emancipation of the serfs, says that anything which tends to change or modify in any respect the institution of the *Mir* (the village commune) would be disastrous. On this point Slavophils and Socialists were agreed. To-day the disintegration of the *Mir* is the trump card of the Nationalists and Conservatives, and the Social Democrats support them; the alliance remains the same, but it has gone over to the other side. Some consider that Socialism can arise only out of the existence of private property, whereas most of the Liberals, who no longer talk of the *Mir* as being the chief and main drag on Russian progress, are opposing the legislation whose end is to change it.

To go back to what happened in the 'sixties. The work of elaborating the scheme of emancipation continued in spite of wide divergence of opinion, heated argument and discussion in the Central Drafting Committee. The Emperor used his influence here in bringing the minority into line with the majority when they disagreed.

At the end of June, 1859, nearly all the local provincial commissions (forty-four out of forty-eight) had finished their work and drawn up their proposals; but since in almost every single commission a divergence of opinion existed, they nearly all of them forwarded two draft schemes to the Minister of the Interior: one representing the opinion of the majority, and the other the opinion of the minority. Two members of each commission, one representing the majority and the other the minority, were summoned to St. Petersburg. The representatives of the provincial commissions were divided into two lots. Representatives of twenty-one provinces arrived in St. Petersburg towards the end of August, 1859; the representatives of the remaining provinces were to follow several months later, as soon as the members of the first lot left.

The Deputies inaugurated their meetings in the middle of August, and were summoned into the presence of the Central Committees; their duties consisted in giving written answers to questions put to them by the Central Committees, and verbal explanations during the meetings.

In September the Deputies were received at Tsarskoe Selo by the Emperor, who, in addressing them, said that he fully realized that the reform could not be carried out without sacrifice on their

part, but that his endeavour would be to mitigate as far as was possible the sharpness of that sacrifice: that he would do his best to help them, and that in return he counted on their co-operation.

In spite of the Emperor's efforts, the relations between the provincial Deputies and the Central Committees grew strained. The cause of the difference was thus pithily summed up by General Rostovtsov in a report which he wrote to the Emperor:

"The chief source of divergence," he said, "consists in this: that the committees and the Deputies, with certain exceptions, look at the matter from a different point of view. The committees look at the matter from the point of view of State necessity and the rights of the State: the Deputies look at it from the point of view of the rights of the citizen and private interests. They are right from their point of view; we are right from ours. From the point of view of civil justice, the whole of the projected reform from the beginning to the end is unjust, because it constitutes a violation of the rights of private property; but looked upon as a State necessity, and as being based on the rights of the State, the reform is legal, indispensable, and holy."

The provincial Deputies divided themselves into three groups: a group of eighteen members, of five, and of one. Each of these groups presented a petition to the Emperor, and the group that consisted of one member went far beyond the matter in hand and asked for a general change in the constitution of the State, for the introduction of local self-government based on elective principles, for the reform of the judicial organization, and for the liberty of the Press. In January, 1860, General Rostovtsov fell ill; he only just had time to draw up a final report on the peasant question, and he died on February 5 in the arms of the Emperor, to whom his last words, "Do not be afraid, Sire," were addressed.

Six days later a new president of the drafting committees was appointed, Count V. N. Panin. This created considerable alarm, as Panin was supposed to be an opponent of the reform; but the Emperor, on appointing him, made it clear that he was made president on the condition of carrying out the reform on the lines which had already been laid down. Panin on his side declared his determination to carry

out his master's will, even should it be at variance with his own convictions.

Panin kept his word: by the middle of June the committees began to codify their work. On October 10 their task was ended, and the Drafting Committees were closed. The result of their work was referred to the principal committee, which had forty sittings on the subject, over which the Grand Duke Constantine presided, and each of which lasted from six to seven hours. The debates were heated, and some of the members expressed their disagreement with the work of the Drafting Committees; but finally the Grand Duke Constantine succeeded in obtaining a majority, and the projects drawn up by the Drafting Committees were accepted by the principal committee. The last meeting of the committee took place on January 26, 1861, under the presidency of the Emperor. On January 28, the projects were brought forward in the Council of State. On February 19, the Act of Emancipation was signed by the Emperor. On March 2, it was referred to the Senate, and on March 5 it was read out after Mass, in the churches of St. Petersburg.

Let us now consider for a moment the nature of the act of reform which the Government carried out. The reform was based on a kind of compromise between the Socialistic and the Individualist principle, in which the Socialistic principle nevertheless preponderated. The common ownership of the land was maintained; but certain measures favourable to private property were admitted.

The reform in itself consisted of a huge expropriation. More than 130,000,000 desiatines, that is to say, 350,964,187 acres, practically half the land in Russia, passed from the hands of the landowners into the hands of the peasants in perpetuity. They were to pay for it in instalments extending over a period of fifty years; but the whole of the amount due from the peasants was paid down immediately to the nobility by the Government. The peasants were to continue to own the land in common, and the land could not be redistributed more than once every twelve years, and even then a redistribution was only possible if two-thirds of the village assembly voted for it. The whole community was responsible for the payment of each peasant's instalments; but every member of the community had the right to buy himself

out by paying in one single instalment the whole of the sum necessary to redeem his land.

The two great questions which attended this operation and which had to be settled were (*a*) the amount of land which should be ceded by the landlord to the peasant; (*b*) the amount of remuneration which the landlord should receive for the land he ceded. There was no question of compensating him for his loss in labour, that is to say, for his serfs.

In a country as large as Russia it was, of course, impossible to fix a universal limit by which all the emancipated serfs should receive the same quantity of land. The principle on which the Government went was that each peasant should, as far as possible, be in possession of as much land as he possessed before the emancipation—enough land to support a family. In applying the principle there were factors, such as the difference of soil and climate, the comparative density of the population, local conditions and customs, which had to be taken into consideration. Various arrangements accordingly were made in various places. In Lithuania and Little Russia special arrangements were made. Great Russia was divided into three large zones—north, centre, and south—which again were subdivided into districts, and in each district a certain maximum and minimum quantity of land which the peasants could receive was laid down.

If we take the average of the different districts, each peasant received from 8¼ to 11 acres; in the north he received as much as 19 acres, and in the rich zone of the black earth as little as 5 acres.

The division of the land amongst the peasants and the nobility was carried out by special arbitrators, *Mirovie Posredniki*, who were created for the purpose. Their duty consisted in settling any differences which should arise between the landlords and the peasants, who were bound, during the two years following the emancipation, to draw up a charter showing the amount of land received by the peasants, and the rent which the peasants had to pay. The arbitrators were elected by the nobility; in cases of conflict their decision was final, save for its confirmation by a provincial chamber. They carried out their work impartially. With regard to this M. Leroy Beaulieu writes as follows:—

"Il semble que ces arbitres, désignés par les propriétaires et pris dans leurs rangs, aient dû êtres enclins à favoriser les interêts

de leurs pareils. Il n'en a rien été ; par un phénomène qui fait honneur à la noblesse Russe et qu'expliquent en partie la générosité et la mobilité du caractère national, ces élus des propriétaires, dont la majorité était hostile à la dotation territoriale de serfs, ont pris leur rôle d'arbitre si fort au sérieux qu'ils se sont mainte-fois fait accuser de partialité envers les paysans."

With regard to the second question, the amount of compensation the landlord was to receive for the land ceded by him, the basis of valuation taken was not the value of the land which the peasant was to receive, but the capitalization of the payments in kind and villein service performed by the peasants during the epoch of serfdom, in return for the use of the land—in brief, the rent. The State, in paying down the amount due from the peasants to the landlords, and in advancing the money to the peasant, acted as banker to both parties, and made a gigantic loan. But it was impossible for the State to pay the landlords down in kind. Accordingly two bonds were issued, guaranteed by the State: one paying 5 per cent and the other 5½ per cent, nominally. The peasant had to pay back the money advanced to him in a period of forty-nine years at 6 per cent interest. One of the reasons why certain people were opposed to the expropriation of the land in favour of the peasants was that they said the peasant would end by paying back far more than the value of what he received, as he had often been obliged to pay rent out of all proportion to the land which he farmed. The official estimates made by the Government, by which the amount of capital which should be advanced with the guarantee of the State to the landlords was defined, were criticized on all sides. Some people found fault with them for being unfair on the landlord, and others blamed them for being too high, and consequently a burden on the peasants. Nevertheless it was absolutely necessary that the State should set some kind of limit to the extent to which public credit could be pledged.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CONSEQUENCES OF EMANCIPATION

I. THE MIR

AS far as the peasants were concerned, the primary result of the Act of Emancipation, beside the abolition of their personal servitude, was that the communal system was consolidated and made permanent. The commune was made into a class institution.

It is first necessary to make quite clear exactly what the *Mir* was.

Its historical origin is a matter of dispute. The earliest method of land tenure in Russia, which was mentioned in the *Russkaia Pravda* of Yaroslav at the end of the eleventh century, was the ownership of land in an undivided state by the members of a household. Professor Kovalievski calls it a "family communism." "The chief characteristic," he writes, "of this holding consisted in the fact that though the land remained undivided, and lay open as it had done for centuries before, every member of the household, nevertheless, was the possessor of a share in the various fields belonging to the family."

Again, in referring to the medieval community in Russia, he says :—

"The general characteristic of the old Russian community may be given in a few words : it was a kind of ownership based on the idea that the proprietor of the land was none other than the commune. The rights of the commune to the soil occupied by individual households appears in the indivisibility of the waste and forest lands, and in the fact that vacant shares are regularly disposed of by the commune; . . . arable land and meadows are, as a rule, in the hands of private households, which pay taxes and perform manual labour in direct proportion to the land they own. This ownership does not suppose the existence of certain limits which nobody is allowed to infringe. It implies only the right to have a definite share in the three fields which constitute the agricultural area of the village. The shares are

not equal, but differ in direct proportion to the payments which the household is called upon to make, partly to the State and partly to the lord of the manor. Periodical redistributions are unknown."

The organization of the medieval commune was completely revolutionized by the introduction of the principle of an equal division of the soil among the members, and of a periodical redistribution of the allotments of ground, which was made in order to render equality possible. Professor Kovalievski designates as the causes of the change the increase of the population and the substitution of the capitation tax for the land tax by Peter the Great in 1719, which has already been explained. It stands to reason that from the moment a household ceased to be taxed according to the quantity of land it owned, and was taxed according to the number of its members, as registered in the taxation returns, if the land remained in the hands of those who possessed it at the time of the change, the result would be manifestly unfair. Consequently the peasants demanded an equal division of shares in the land, and a redistribution was made whenever the Government revised its taxation returns, which occurred once every nineteenth year. Some communes redistributed their land more frequently.

Matters continued like this until the law of emancipation was promulgated in 1861, when the commune was made into a class institution.

In the commune of ancient Russian history the pasture land and the forests were also possessed in common. Sometimes they belonged to several neighbouring villages which, in that case, constituted a larger area, known under the name of *volost*. After the emancipation the *volost*, or canton, was revived as an administrative unit, and the villages became the administrative units of which it was formed. The *volosts* vary in size all over Russia, they can include as many as thirty villages; on the other hand, in some places they have as few as two or even one. Both the *volost* and the village are self-governing. The village is governed by the village assembly. The heads of households meet in council and decide their affairs on the principle of one man one vote. The village assembly manages the property of the village and divides it among its members. It has disciplinary rights, and the control of leases of land made to

outsiders. It can buy things which are necessary for the community and can spend money on the relief of its poor.

The assembly elects an officer, called the village elder, the *Starosta,* who represents the commune in its relations with the Government officials of the district and of the province. He collects the taxes, calls the meetings, and exercises a certain amount of supervision over the repair of roads and public buildings. But the apportioning of personal taxation and the periodical redistribution of the common land is carried out by the assembly.

As has already been said, by the law of 1861 a redistribution could not take place unless two-thirds of the assembly voted for it, nor could any of the common land become private property without a similar majority.

The *volost* has an assembly also. Each village sends one man from every ten households to the *volost* meeting, which elects candidates for the post of elder of the *volost,* and five judges from among the peasants to serve on the law court of the *volost.* It also votes on the salaries and the expenses of the administration of the *volost:* a majority of two-thirds is also necessary for a motion to pass.

There may be more than one community and consequently more than one assembly in each village, because every community represents the peasants and the land which belonged to one landowner. In one village, a part of the land may have belonged to Count X, another part to Mr. Y, and another part to Miss Z. In that village there will now be three distinct communities. I have never seen this simple fact stated in books. In the days of serfdom every landowner possessed so much land and the "souls" or serfs belonging to it. When serfdom was abolished the landowner sold a portion of his land to his serfs, and the former serfs became an independent community; therefore, for each formerly existing batch of serfs belonging to one owner there is now a community. Besides the land belonging to private landowners, there were six million desiatines (16,200,000 acres) of State lands, and the serfs who were attached to this land consequently belonged to the State. When they were emancipated, the serfs who had belonged to the State received such portions of this land as were fit for cultivation.

Peasants who worked in factories which belonged to the State

received their homesteads, and besides these, there were the *dvorovie liudi*, the "men of the yard"; that is to say, serfs who were in the domestic service of the landowner. These received no land, for the good reason that at the time of the emancipation they did not possess any. Many of them became artisans and helped to swell the ranks of the Russian proletariat. At the time of the emancipation there were about a million and a half of such men.

During the period in which the reform was elaborated, the question was raised whether the landlord should retain any executive authority in the limits of his township, or whether the village should be henceforth entirely self-governing and independent with regard to its internal affairs. The Radicals and the Slavophils were both opposed to any such idea, and only the Liberals were in favour of it. They failed to carry their point, so the village community became a class institution. That is to say, nobody except a peasant had the right to vote either in the village or in the *volost*. However long a man of another class might live in a village he would have no right to interfere in any way with its internal administration. This arrangement was made by the reformers for fear that the landed nobility should retain their influence over the peasants, if they were allowed to have any voice in their affairs.

"It was," writes Professor Kovalievski, "to prevent a practical restoration of feudal power that the upper classes were debarred from all interference in village matters. But the legislators forgot the dangers which arise from the artificial isolation of an ill-educated class, both for itself and for the other orders of society. I know no country in which the enlightened classes have so little opportunity of exercising that moral influence without which no social progress can be really achieved. Not only the squire, be he a nobleman or a merchant, but also the parish priest (the pope), are excluded by law from the right of voting in the village assembly. Questions concerning public instruction and public health are daily discussed and settled by illiterate men, very often to the injury of the community, without any reference to the wishes and intentions of the more enlightened inhabitants, whose interference in such cases would be considered a direct infringement of the law. This is certainly a great wrong; a wrong which is clearly seen both by society and by the Government."

Professor Kovalievski further points out that the peasant being bereft of the guidance which the enlightened classes could exercise, naturally turns for protection to those among his own class who have acquired wealth. The richer peasants are known under the name of *Kulak*, which means close-fisted; they are, as a rule, no better educated than the rest of the peasants, and far more selfish and immoral. It will be understood, therefore, that the first important result of the liberation of the serfs was to strike the nobility out of the life of the peasant.

I will now go on to the effect which emancipation had on agriculture. In order to make this clear it will be necessary to say something more of the system on which the arable land and the meadows were owned by the peasants. We have already seen that the land was owned in common. The waste and forest land remained undivided, and in distributing the arable land the peasants took into consideration the nature of the soil and its situation. The soil may be richer in one part than in another, and more or less advantageous or disadvantageous according to its situation. It may, for instance, be too far from the village, and situated on land that is either too high or too low to be profitable. So as to be able to balance the disadvantages of the soil and its situation in one place by the advantages of the soil and its situation in another, so as to ensure absolute fairness and equality in division, the community divided the whole of the land that is available for cultivation into " shots " or " furlongs," and in each of these " shots " or " furlongs " each householder received as many strips as there are taxed persons in his household. Supposing A was entitled to receive an acre, he was given a quarter of it in furlong A which is sandy, a quarter of it in furlong B which is fertile, a quarter of it in furlong C which is far from the village, and a quarter of it in furlong D which is near the village; and thus a fair division was ensured. Practically, therefore, the peasants divided the land into three categories—good, bad, and indifferent—and each household had a share in each category.

In practice, what happened was that the poorer peasants let a portion of their land to the richer peasants, and a quantity of small arrangements of this kind were carried out. Where there is no great difference in the fertility of the soil, and consequently less need for dividing the land into categories, another

method of division is sometimes adopted. The meadows are mown in common, and the results of the hay harvests are divided in equal shares among the members of the community.

When the land was redistributed, if two-thirds of the community were agreed, the number of strips falling to each household varied as that household increased or decreased in numbers. Such a redistribution was partial. There could also be a total redistribution of the arable land, which could take place after as short a period as three years, the interval necessary for a complete rotation of the crops, or after as long a period as nineteen years.[1] It might take place once in every twelve years. The number of shares which each householder received after such a redistribution corresponded either to the number of male persons for whom the household paid a tax, or to the number of working hands, male and female, of which the household consisted at the last revision.

The accepted method of agriculture, which, owing to the mosaic-like intermixture of the land of each household with its neighbours', was the same for all, was the three-field system—winter, summer, and fallow. After the harvest was over the fields became common pasture.

With regard to the advantages and disadvantages of this system, there is nothing in Russian life which has raised so much discussion and so many widely conflicting opinions. Moreover, during the last years a great change has come about in various features of public opinion with regard to the question. Defenders of the *Mir* have become its opponents; and those very Socialists who once looked forward to the realization of Cavour's prophecy that "Russia will revolutionize the world with her system of the *Mir*," are now convinced that the abolition of the *Mir* and the establishment of small holdings is the better way towards the fulfilment of their dream.

One thing is certain: agriculture in Russia, after the emancipation, did not improve. How could it? It was argued, and not without foundation, that one great drawback of agrarian communism was that it was not worth the peasant's while to expend money on strips of land which would pass out of his hands at the next redistribution. But apart from this, it may well be asked, even if the peasant had been willing to expend money

[1] Nineteen years separate one census from another.

in order to improve agriculture, although he himself would not benefit by the improvement, how was any sensible improvement possible, given the fact of the division of the land into small and separate strips ?

In any case, so far from improving, Russian agriculture began to deteriorate. The landlords, who had been accustomed to obtain manual labour for nothing, were incapable of rapidly adapting themselves to the changed conditions, and they did one of two things : they either spent the money they had received for their land from the Government in efforts towards agricultural improvement—and such efforts, owing to a lack of practical knowledge (which led them to do what was unnecessary and to leave undone the indispensable), proved fruitless—or else they went abroad and spent their money anyhow. About half the landlords in Russia disappeared. Their place was taken to a certain degree by the peasants, and in a greater degree by merchants, who were bent on extracting the uttermost farthing from their property. A new and mixed class of landed proprietors came into being, which can be roughly divided into two sections :

(1) Those who let all their land to the peasants ;

(2) Those who tried as far as possible to carry on agriculture rationally.

These, in spite of the difficulties and obstacles inseparable from the circumstances, achieved, nevertheless, comparatively good results. But, on the whole, the change brought about universal agricultural depression. The peasants had never parted with their old idea that the land should all of it, by rights, belong to them, nor with their dream that the time would come when it would be given them. Thus throughout the reigns of Alexander II and Alexander III, the affairs of the peasants went jogging on without any material change being made in the situation.

During the reign of Alexander III the Government looked upon the peasants as the safest element in the population. On several occasions a large portion of the money which was advanced to the peasants at the time of the emancipation and was still owing to the Government was remitted. In order to help the two landowning classes in Russia, two land banks were instituted (*Credit Foncier*), one for the peasantry and one for the nobility, in close relation to each other and which were located in the

same building. They were to help the nobility to get working capital and the peasants to buy land. It generally happened that the land which came into the possession of the Bank of the Nobility, owing to the insolvency of landowners, was sold to the peasants through the Peasants' Bank.

In 1889, the local Justices of the Peace were abolished, and in their place were instituted the *Zemskie-nachalniki*, called by some English writers "Land Captains," by others "District Commanders." They were a kind of official squire. The office could in principle only be held by members of the hereditary nobility. They were called upon to exercise executive and judicial authority over the villages in their district. They were therefore police-officers, making their own by-laws, and magistrates empowered to decide on the infringement of these same by-laws.

They were instituted in order to increase the local influence of the nobility. But, as Professor Miliukov says, the Government used the new office of Zemskie-nachalniki for its own ends, and not for the ends of the nobility. Their nomination depended on the governor of the province, and the district commanders are responsible in all they do to the governor. They thus become, in reality, officials of the Ministry and not men of weight among the local nobility. The office was and is extremely unpopular with the peasantry.

The affairs of the peasants, except for the constant famines, went on apparently with unruffled calm until the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. When peace was made in 1905, the country was in a state of profound political unrest, and reform and demands for reform were in the air. In October occurred the universal strike, which was followed, on October 30, (October 17, O.S.), by the publication of a manifesto conferring political rights on the people. Political parties were quickly formed, and the most radical of them offered as a solution of the land question, and as a bait for popular support, the complete expropriation of all landed property.

All this resulted in agrarian riots. The peasants were angered by the railway strike, which considerably interfered with the transport of provisions; they felt the microbes of revolution that were in the air, and all over the country occurred incidents which you read of in French history under the name of *quelques Jacqueries*. Landowners' houses were burnt, their

property and cattle destroyed. The peasants considered that the day of "levelling" had come. Everybody felt that until something was done towards settling the land question there would be no peace in Russia. The first Duma met in April. It consisted almost entirely of Liberals, and the expropriation of the land was advocated by some of the chief Liberal leaders. It was, however, violently opposed by others. This question was, in reality, the rock on which the first Duma split; because those Liberal leaders who had made the expropriation of the landowners' property, in favour of the peasants, one of the chief assets of their political programme, were forced to realize that they had burdened themselves with an aim which was far better suited to theory than to fact.

The matter is simple and requires but little explanation. Universal expropriation was brought forward as "a solution of the land question." In the shape in which it was discussed, it applied to both the classes of landowners mentioned above. With regard to that class of landowners which let their land to the peasants, it was admitted that there was no possible argument against the expropriation of all their land. With regard to the second class, those who endeavoured to carry on agriculture rationally, it is clear that their land, from the point of view of the State, represented a considerable asset. If the whole of this land were immediately to be handed over to the peasants, it would cease to be an asset to the State, because the peasants had not the means of maintaining the cultivation of it on the level which it had already reached. It would be impossible for the State to provide them with the means. It was just because the peasants were without the necessary means—because they were poor—that they were asking for more land. But, both from the point of view of the State, and of the peasants, wholesale expropriation would be disastrous: to the State, because its immediate result would be a decrease of public revenue, and an increase of agricultural depression all over Russia; to the peasants, because the relief would only be temporary, even if the distribution of the land could have been carried out on the same scale, and in the same proportion, as at the time of the emancipation, which was improbable. The relief could only be temporary because, owing to the constant increase of the population, the land would dwindle in an equally constant and increasing process of subdivision, and the State would be

unable to assist the peasants, and to furnish them with the means of improving their methods of agriculture, owing to the decrease of revenue which would necessarily be caused by the expropriation.

Such were the arguments against expropriation. They were the incarnation of common sense, and they carried the day. The Duma was dissolved. The talk of expropriation became a mere abstract discussion. But in the meantime some kind of settlement was everywhere aimed at, before the Government took any steps in the matter, between the landowners and the peasants. All over Russia nearly every single landlord sold a certain amount of land to the peasants; the proportion varied according to the intensity of the disorders in his region; and as a rule he sold the land which he did not farm himself, but which he let to the peasants. Thus it came about that in 1905 about 25 per cent of the land passed from the hands of the landowners to the peasants; and the disorders among the peasantry either died down or were suppressed by the troops. The question was also dealt with by the Government. When the peasants were advanced money by the State, at the time of the emancipation, it was decided that they should pay interest for a period of forty-nine years, that is to say, until 1910. By an Imperial edict of 1905, it was laid down that the payments should cease in 1907, and all such regulations which were drawn up in 1861, limiting the disposal and enjoyment of small holdings by the peasants, were to cease to hold good also. But in order to make the new state of things aimed at by the edict possible in practice, fresh legislation, which should complete and develop the clauses of the edict, was necessary. A ukaze, issued on November 9, 1906, changed and completed the conditions under which the peasants should own land, and was brought into the Duma in the shape of a Bill on April 4, 1907, where it was debated in twenty-one sittings, from October, 1908, to April, 1909. In May it was sent to the Council of Empire. The differences of opinion on certain clauses of the Bill between the two houses were discussed by a committee of both houses in May, 1910, and on June 14 the Bill became law.

According to this new law a great change was effected in the conditions under which the peasants could hold land.

In the first place, according to the new law, every householder

who owned a share of the land belonging to the commune had henceforward the right, at any moment, of demanding that his share should become his own individual and permanent property.

Further, every householder had also henceforward the right, when he withdrew from the commune, and the various strips of land, temporarily in his possession, became his personal and permanent property, to demand from the commune in exchange for these separate strips a corresponding amount of land, which should be, as far as possible, in one place. Now, as I have already explained, according to the communal system, each householder owned strips of land in proportion to the number of the members of his family.[1] If, for instance, in the period between one distribution and another, a household decreased, it would retain in its possession, during that period, a greater amount of land than it would be allowed to keep at the next redistribution, when the decrease in the household would be taken into account. It is obvious that it will always be advantageous to this class—which, owing to the general increase of the population, must always be in the minority—to avail itself of the new law, because by so doing it renders a share, which is by rights only temporarily excessive, permanent. I will call this class, in which households decrease, the minority, Class B. I will call the majority, that is to say, those landholders whose households increase, Class A. According to this state of things, all the surplus that accrues to Class B accrues to him unfairly, and to meet this injustice the law provides that members of Class B should pay to Class A, on leaving the commune, a certain sum of money, as a compensation for the surplus of land that accrues to them over and above the share common to all. But the compensation is calculated on the basis of the valuation of the land made in 1861, at the time of the emancipation, and so far from corresponding with the true and actual value of the land, it is incomparably less.

If the commune for this or for other reasons, objects to members of Class B withdrawing from the commune, and omits to signify the fact that a member (or members) of Class B wishes to do so,

[1] In those villages where the redistribution (officially, at least) is made according to the number of male workers in each household (see page 239) at the present moment the disadvantages of the law are even sharper, since the period between the redistribution being longer, the difference between the majority and minority is sharper.

in a space of thirty days, then the member or members of Class B has or have the right to appeal to the district commander, whose duty it is to investigate the matter and to give a decision on it. If the commune or any member of it is dissatisfied with the decision of the district commander, they can lodge a complaint with him, which he has to refer to the district committee.

The district committee is composed of all the district commanders for their respective districts, and the marshal of the nobility of the district presides over it.[1] Its decision by another law has been made final.

If the peasant wishes not only to withdraw from the commune, by converting his share into permanent and personal property, but to receive in exchange for it a portion of land in one place, and there to start a farm, the Government gives him a certain amount of financial assistance. The advantages of the law are obvious, and one would have thought that every member of the commune would have hastened to leave it; because theoretically, it is clearly more advantageous for every man to own his land separately, and the majority of the Russian peasantry has never objected to this point. Its only disadvantage lies in the perhaps unduly partial treatment which it accords to the minority. It will be clear that the majority, Class A, will be disinclined to leave the commune before the period of redistribution, when, by waiting till it comes, they expect to receive additional land, owing to the increase in their households. It is also clear that they will object to Class B withdrawing from the commune, because by so doing, Class B takes the surplus land with them, thereby diminishing the individual shares of Class A; and the compensation that they receive for this loss is so inadequate that it is practically fictitious. This explains why Class A has been slower to take advantage of the new law than was anticipated.

The reason why the interests of the minority were upheld to the detriment of those of the majority was, that the Government in so doing wished to create a class of sound, conservative voters out of the more prosperous peasant landowners, which is obviously the minority alluded to, Class B. If it be objected that the rights of the majority are safeguarded by their appeal to the

[1] It also includes other officials, and above all a "special member" or Land Commissioner who really does all the work.

district committee, it must be borne in mind that the appeal can never prevent Class B from withdrawing from the commune on the lines already explained: it can only affect legal questions which concern the land in question. As the law has worked so far, as far as one can judge, Class B does all it can to take advantage of the new law, and also such peasants who do not farm their land themselves, but who let it to others and live in towns.

It is, of course, much too soon to speak with authority on the results of the law. All that can be said positively is that the law is a real, vital, serious, and conscientious step in the direction of reform. Its possible disadvantages are probably largely outweighed by its advantages. But at the same time, if we consider that (although the peasants are displaying eagerness to withdraw from the commune in order to become the permanent owners of their respective strips) so far only 4 per cent[1] of the peasants have availed themselves of the right to exchange their strips for a piece of land in one place and to start farms, it is too soon to speak of a transformation of rural Russia.

[1] According to the official returns for 1910.

CHAPTER XX

THE CONSEQUENCES OF EMANCIPATION (*continued*)

THE ZEMSTVO

THE period of Russian history during which the emancipation was carried out is called by Russians the "Epoch of the Great Reforms." The radical change effected by the emancipation of the serfs necessitated reforms in the administration of the country, and the chief of these was the introduction of a system of provincial self-government. "Introduction" is hardly an accurate description, because we have seen that Catherine II had already laid the foundations of self-government. What Alexander II did was to return to the old idea and to develop it.

Before discussing the nature of his reform, it will be necessary to say a few words about the manner in which the principles laid down by the Empress Catherine had been developed. Catherine II, as we have seen, gave the nobility a considerable part to play in local government, and by including the merchants in it, she endeavoured to create a bourgeoisie. A law respecting the functions of the nobility and the merchants was promulgated in 1785, and remained in force until 1864.

The chief prerogative of the nobility consisted in the right of appointing the local judges and the chief local officials, and of exercising control over the provincial governors. The administration of the district—its courts of justice, its police, and its finances—was theoretically in the hands of the nobility. In practice, the rights of the nobility remained dormant. The nobility, owing to its apathy, took no advantage of them, and only went through the form of exercising them. They appointed the local officials and the local judges, but once they had been appointed, they exercised no authority over them. Control over the administration by the nobility (which had been Catherine's aim) remained a theory. Once every

three years the assemblies of the nobility met, and they continue to meet still.

In order to belong to the Assembly of Nobles you have to be, besides a noble by birth, a landowner in the district or the province, and to possess either a civil or a military rank, a " chin " or, in default of the " chin," certificates showing you have passed certain examinations. The rating which qualified for franchise in elections to the assembly of nobility was based formerly on the number of serfs they possessed; it is at present based on the value of the candidates' property. The nobility of the district elect a president, who is called their marshal, and the marshals of the district elect a marshal for the whole province.

When the nobility lost the exclusive possession of the land, they naturally lost the exclusive right of representing the province. And since by the act of reform self-government was introduced into the administration of the village, it was a natural corollary that it should be introduced into the administration of the province.

In 1864, side by side with the assemblies of the nobility, new assemblies consisting of representatives of the different classes were created. This new assembly was called the *Zemstvo*, which means " territorial assembly," the word zemstvo coming from the word *zemlia*, which means land. It is what we should call a county council.

The Zemstvo consisted of representatives of every class. The nobility elected so many members to represent them, and the peasants so many. The number in both cases was fixed by law The representatives of the peasants had to be peasants.

A Zemstvo Assembly was established in each *district* (Uiezd), that is to say, in each subdivision of the province, and the province itself had a higher Zemstvo Assembly of its own. Both the assemblies had to be summoned at least once a year.

The nobility elect their own representatives, and the franchise is modelled on that established by Catherine II for the election of the assemblies of nobles, with this difference: lineage and " chin " have nothing to do with the matter. The rating qualifying for franchise is based on property, and is a high one. The peasants elect representatives from their societies on a new system of universal suffrage of three or four degrees, that is to say, the village members of the Zemstvo are elected by members

of the Cantons or Volosts, who are, in their turn, elected by the village assemblies. Twenty-five members or so will be chosen from the different Volosts, and out of these the governor, acting on the confidential advice of the marshal of the district, till recently selected ten. From thirty to forty members are elected to the District Zemstvo. Two-thirds of these will belong to the nobility. The marshal of the nobility of the district is president of the District Zemstvo *ex officio*.

The annual session lasts generally for the inside of a week; it cannot legally last longer than fifteen days. The session is public. A great deal of the work is done in committee. The sessions of the Provincial Zemstvo Assembly last longer: but a session cannot last longer than twenty-one days. All the marshals of the district are members of the Zemstvo *ex officio;* the marshal of nobility of the province presides. Besides this, it includes about seven or eight members of every District Zemstvo. The decisions of the Provincial Zemstvo Assembly can be cancelled by the governor, but they have the right of appealing to the Senate.

Both the District and the Provincial Zemstvo have the right of electing a permanent committee, consisting of four or five members, called the *Zemskaia Uprava*, which is elected once every three years and does all the real work of the Zemstvo. Its president is elected, but his election must be confirmed by the Minister of the Interior. Its members receive a salary which is fixed by the assembly. When the sessions of the Zemstvo take place, the permanent committee sits in the intervals during the meetings, and acts as the executive of the assembly.

Before the creation of the Zemstvo the nobility had the right of appointing the justices of peace and the county police.

In every district the chief of the police is called the *Ispravnik;* he is represented in the larger localities by a minor officer called the *Stanovoi Pristav*. When the Zemstvo was created the appointment of the justices of peace was transferred to it from the nobility, and the appointment of the Ispravnik was made over to the governor. Therefore, from the moment when the Zemstvo was created, the rights of the assembly of the nobility were practically confined to the right of holding their assemblies and discussing the needs of their districts (in the epoch from 1870 to 1900 the assemblies of the nobility were perhaps

the only outlet in Russia for free discussion), of electing their marshals, and performing minor duties such as relieving the poor, giving scholarships to the sons of poor nobles, and appointing wardens to look after the rights of minors.

But the nobility is, to a certain degree, compensated individually for what it lost collectively by the part played by its marshals. During the second half of the reign of Alexander II the powers of the marshals were extended. The marshal of the nobility was made president of the Board of Public Instruction, and, in fact, whenever the co-operation of the inhabitants of the district was required by the Government, the marshal of the nobility was called upon to preside over any local meeting, gathering, or function, which resulted from such co-operation.

Let us now proceed to the functions and attributes of the Zemstvo. Roughly speaking, the Zemstvo of the district has to look after all the affairs of the district, and the Zemstvo of the province has to see to all the affairs of the whole province—the "Government." They have the right to levy a tax on land and on houses. The Provincial Zemstvo distributes taxation among the districts of the Government, and the District Zemstvo distributes the taxes among the communities of the district. The chief business of the Provincial Zemstvo consists in gathering together the threads of the work of the District Zemstva.

Within the scope of the Zemstvo are asylums, hospitals, schools, roads and their repair, sanitary arrangements, agricultural improvements, insurance, and charitable institutions. At a first glance it would seem as if local elective assemblies, with functions as wide as these, with their permanent committees, would have the upper hand of the bureaucratic officials in the administration of local affairs. "Il est loin d'en être encore ainsi," said M. Leroy Beaulieu, on this very point, in 1882. M. Leroy Beaulieu's comments on the inability of the Zemstvo to control the Government officials, the bureaucracy, can be summed up briefly as follows:—

When the new territorial assemblies, he says, were cast into the midst of the old administrative organization, the ancient hierarchy, the latter was left untouched. The functions and rights of the officials were in no way limited and modified. The officials retained authority and responsibility. Instead of the new institution being fused with the general scheme of adminis-

tration, it was abruptly thrown into it, and no *organic* link was created between the new institution and the ancient institutions which surrounded it.

The new wine of self-government was poured into the old skins of the bureaucratic order, which was, by its nature, incompatible with self-government. Either the old or the new principle was necessarily destined to take the second place. It was impossible for Russia to serve the old master and the new simultaneously.

Professor Miliukov, writing in 1905, practically repeats this criticism. Between 1880 and 1905 nothing happened to lessen this incompatibility, or to prevent the necessary result of the weaker of the two orders being subject to the stronger, the weaker being the Zemstvo. Professor Miliukov considers the cause of the inherent weakness of the Zemstvo, as an institution, to be an organic fault—the same fault which M. Leroy Beaulieu points out, namely, the absence of a link between the Zemstvo and the people whose interests they were meant to represent. He attributes the absence of this link to the conscious omission of it on the part of the legislators, who distrusted the landed proprietors, and so greatly feared that they might retain their local power that the Zemstvo was not allowed a free hand, even in its own area of jurisdiction. For this reason, he says (and whether this was the reason or no, the fact remains), nothing corresponding to a vestry, a parish, or a township was created: no lower elective unit. The Zemstvo Assembly, with its executive board, was the sole representative body of the whole district. Above the Zemstvo of the district, there is, as we have seen, the Provincial Zemstvo Assembly, but Professor Miliukov's point—in which he carries M. Leroy Beaulieu's argument still further—is that in the population itself there were no commissioners and no boards *below* those of the district which could execute the decisions of the Zemstvo.

In levying taxes, in controlling the application of the by-laws, the Zemstvo was entirely dependent on the officials and police officers of the central administration. "Thus," writes Professor Miliukov, "to use a current saying, the new building of the Zemstva was left without a foundation, floating in the air." Professor Miliukov says that it also remained "without the roof," because it was meant to culminate in central political

representation. But a *fait nouveau* of startling violence, namely, the brutal murder of Alexander II, the liberator of the serfs, by the Nihilists, delayed all attempts to bring about this consummation. This is recognized by any one—Liberal or Conservative—who possesses a grain of fairness.

"The transformation of the medieval State into one that answered to the requirements of modern civilization would have been completed," writes Professor Kovalievski, in 1890, "if the liberator of millions had not been slaughtered on the very day on which he had undertaken to give a constitution to his people."

Before the death of Alexander II, the next step of importance in the idea of self-government was the establishment of town councils, which occurred in 1870. They were organized on the same principle as the provincial and district assemblies, but the merchants were taken as their chief unit. This was a step in advance. But with regard to the provincial assemblies, steps were taken to limit their powers. In 1866–7 the presidents received full powers to stop a discussion and to close meetings. This cannot be said to have proved a check to the activity of the assemblies; in fact, it probably proved, in practice, a means of accelerating their business. In 1866 the governors were given the right to cancel any nomination made by the Zemstva, should they consider the candidate to be politically dangerous. In 1879 the right was enlarged, and included that of dismissing such persons who had already served in the Zemstvo.

When the Zemstva were founded in the 'sixties, it was thought that the establishment of local self-government was the prelude to political reform of a kind which would ensure the grant of popular representation to Russia. That the Zemstva failed in starting a movement which should have for its aim the realization of such reforms cannot be sufficiently accounted for by saying that they were persecuted by the Government. Professor Miliukov attributes their failure to public opinion, which, he says, was hesitating and wavering between two extremes—conservative nationalism and social revolution. The constitutional Liberals stood midway between these two extreme parties: they were repudiated by both. The Nationalists considered them too liberal, and the Revolutionaries too conservative. He tells us that in 1865 men of moderate Liberal type considered that a period of more

or less modest local work must elapse before the question of political representation could be raised. So the Zemstva, after a few abortive attempts to voice demands for political reform, which were censored by the Government, relapsed into silence.

Ten years passed in modest local work; schools and hospitals were founded, agricultural improvements were introduced. But from 1870 onwards, dissatisfaction with the work of the Zemstva began to find expression. Publicists began to complain of the unsatisfactory state of the Zemstvo in general, of the apathy of its members and the slovenliness of its meetings and of the general absenteeism. Sometimes the assemblies were not held for want of a quorum. Public opinion, which, as ever, played here the important part, after a period of unbridled enthusiasm, caused by the reforms of the 'sixties, had veered round to disillusion; and in this atmosphere of disillusion and general dissatisfaction a revolutionary movement grew up—the nihilist fever and crisis.

Its first manifestation was the action of Vera Zasulich, who fired at the Prefect of St. Petersburg, General Trepov, after having read in the newspapers that he had had one of the political prisoners flogged. She was acquitted by the jury, and the acquittal was approved of by public opinion, and made a deep impression. An "executive committee of social revolutionaries" was formed, and it declared war on the Government. Its method of warfare was terrorism, and a series of terrorist acts began.

In 1878, the Government appealed to society in general to help it in the struggle against the disease of revolution. In the summer of 1878, a Liberal from the south, Petrunkevich, of the Zemstvo of Chernigov, and two others, arranged a meeting for themselves with forty revolutionaries, who represented the terrorist party. Petrunkevich did not convert them. He suggested that a collective petition should be presented to the Emperor asking, among other things, for representation. In November, 1878, the Emperor renewed his appeal to society at a reception in Moscow. The appeal was answered by five Provincial Zemstva. One of them stated that revolutionary ideas cannot be quelled by mere repression; that the cause of the evil lay in the lack of freedom of speech and of the Press. The representatives of the Zemstvo of Tver plainly demanded a

constitution. An attempt was made on the life of the Emperor in February, 1880. On February 9, 1880, a committee was formed of which Count Loris Melikov was president, with the object of taking measures to combat revolution, and to extirpate the causes of anarchy. In August Loris Melikov was appointed Minister of the Interior. In January, 1881, in a report to the Emperor, he stated that the way to combat revolution and terrorism was to summon society to take part in the framing of inevitable reforms. It was decided to summon an assembly of the representatives of the Zemstva and the chief cities, which would play a part with regard to political reform analogous to that played by the " drafting committees " in the emancipation of the serfs.

On March 1, at 12.30, the Emperor approved of a project drawn up in this sense, and ordered that it should be submitted to a Cabinet Council of Ministers, previous to being printed in the official newspaper. At 2.15 the Emperor Alexander started in his sledge from the Michalovski Palace, and when he reached Catherine's Canal, two bombs were thrown at him in succession —he fell a victim to the second.

Loris Melikov's draft was nevertheless discussed in the Council of Ministers on March 20, 1881, after the new Emperor Alexander III had studied it. The majority of the Council, the Grand Duke Vladimir, Count Valovev, Nabokov, Solski, Dimitri Miliutin, Saburov, Abaza, voted for the policy of reform advocated by Loris Melikov. The minority, Count Strogonov, Pobiedonostsev, (the Emperor's former teacher), Prince Lieven, and Posiet, voted against it. After a few days of indecision the Emperor adopted Pobiedonostsev's view and bade him draft a manifesto which was published on April 27 (May 11), 1881, in which he stated his determination to preserve the principle of autocracy intact.

Thus it came about that the question of reform was shelved for another twenty-five years. This was all that the revolutionaries gained. Their organizations were crushed. Society was panic-stricken, and reaction followed necessarily, simply, and inevitably. This set-back in the evolution of Russian reform was the work of the nihilists. It is all they accomplished in Russian history. In order to understand how it came about that they acted as they did, it is necessary to understand who and *what* the nihilists were.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONSEQUENCES OF EMANCIPATION (*continued*)

NIHILISM

NIHILISM and nihilists are known to the world chiefly through fiction. They have played a considerable part in Russian fiction; but it is the nihilists of Western European writers of fiction, and not those of Turgeniev and Dostoievski, who have taken the popular fancy; they are as remote from the reality as the nihilists of Russian novelists are close to it. The nihilist of Western Europe has, indeed, little to distinguish him from the stage villain. He wears a fur coat, smokes cigarettes, conspires vaguely, and blows up magnates with dynamite. The dynamite is really the only attribute which he has in common with the nihilist of fact, and dynamite was to Russian nihilism less than dynamite was to Irish nationalism. But if the nihilist of fact had been an aimless murderer, a mere artist in melodrama, it would not be worth while to dwell upon his characteristics. He was more than that; the atmosphere that produced the nihilist and the things which he did are essential facts of modern Russian history, and therefore have to be dealt with.

The nihilism of the 'seventies and the 'eighties in Russia was a disease; but it was a disease which was inevitably bound to thrive and spread, given the state of the moral atmosphere, the moral sanitary conditions of the country. In the first place, nihilism was far from being a Russian invention, a home-made and indigenous product. Like nearly all abstract Russian ideas and theories, it was imported from abroad. "C'est des derniers fils de Kant," writes M. Leroy Beaulieu, "et des révolutionnaires enfants du pacifique et conservateur Hegel, c'est des plus extrêmes représentants de la gauche hégélienne que les premiers ancêtres ou les premiers apôtres du Nihilisme Russe, Herzen et Bakounine, ont tiré leur inspiration, si non leur méthode ou leurs théories."

It was as *a theory* that nihilism was a foreign import. "In Russia," says Professor Miliukov, "it was only a belated reverberation of a movement which had had its day both in France and Germany. 'Nihilism'[1] borrowed its theoretic expression from St. Simon and from Ludwig Feuerbach."

The nihilist fever, in Russia, was the Russian form of the negative, revolutionary disease which had already raged and burnt out in Western Europe. It was a germ from a dying epidemic, which had devastated Europe and passed away; but it affected the Russian people in a peculiar manner. This is the point. The theory of nihilism was certainly an import: it was the Russian practice of it which is interesting; it is the way the theory was assimilated, adopted, and acted upon, which was peculiar and original. This was due to the peculiar moral atmosphere created by the political and economic situation of the country, and to the Russian temperament acting under the influence of certain conditions.

The moral atmosphere of the epoch in which nihilism came to light, was one of depression, dissatisfaction, and discontent, following immediately after an epoch of hope and enthusiasm. It is difficult for us to realize now the enthusiasm which inflamed the minds of men in those earlier years. Prince Volkonski quotes the following passage from Katkov, the journalist :—

"There are epochs when every man feels the presence of Providence in life, when in the depths of his soul he distinctly hears the present answering the demands of the past, and the answer brings peace and goodwill to human hearts. . . . Blessed is the generation which is destined to live in such times. Thank God we are permitted to live in such a time."

The Russian temperament, which so easily goes to extremes, imagined that the world was about to be transformed; that Utopia was about to be made palpable. The spirit of that age was that which breathes in the fourth eclogue of Virgil, and in Shelley's great chorus :—

"The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn."

[1] The word "nihilism" was invented by Turgeniev in his novel, *Fathers and Sons*.

Only it did not last. The millennium was tardy in its arrival, and Utopia slow in its formation, so the spirit of the age went to the other extreme and despaired of its advent, and denied its possibility. The spirit of the age went further; it reasoned thus: "Since the world is so stubborn, and we cannot change it, let us destroy it. Since we cannot realize our ideal, let us trample on it, spit upon it, and exterminate it. We cannot build our Valhalla on earth; let us destroy the idea of Valhalla. Let us destroy Heaven. Possibly out of the wreck and the ruin, the dust and the ashes of the world, a new world may arise; but that is not important. What is important is to destroy the world that exists now, and the hope of all future and better worlds."

The two great prophets, or rather forerunners of Russian nihilism, were Herzen and Bakunin. Herzen was a political refugee, exiled from Moscow in 1834, who lived abroad, and edited a newspaper in London called the *Kolokol* (the Bell). He is brilliantly characterized by M. Leroy Beaulieu thus:—

"Le poète ou le chantre de la négation, *toujours romantique et idéaliste malgré-lui*, sceptique et triste au fond, révolutionnaire par sympathie, par besoin de croire et d'espérer, le cœur ouvert à toutes les passions comme à tous les nobles sentiments, l'esprit jusqu'à la fin accessible à toutes les idées et même aux dures leçons de l'expérience."

Here is an extract from one of his pamphlets in which he gives us a confession of faith:—

"A thinking Russian is the most independent being in the world. What can stop him? Consideration for the past? But what is the starting-point of modern Russian history if it be not the total negation of nationalism and tradition? On the other hand, the past of Western nations may be useful to us, as a lesson—but that is all; we are not, in history, the executors of their will. We share your doubts, but your belief leaves us cold. We share your hates, but we do not understand your reverence for the legacies of your ancestors. You are checked by scruples and restrained by side issues. We have none. We are independent, because we are starting a new life. . . . We are independent because we have no possessions—nothing to lose. All our memories are full of gall and bitterness. We wear too many chains already; we do not wish to forge new chains. What

do we care—disinherited minors that we are—for the duties you have inherited? Can your worn-out morality satisfy us? Your morality which is neither Christian nor human, which is invoked only in copybook exercises and by the ritual of the law? How can we respect your Roman-Gothic law, that huge fabric devoid of light and fresh air, which was patched up in the Middle Ages and repainted by a bourgeoisie but lately emancipated from slavery? Do not accuse us of immorality on the ground that we do not respect what you hold to be respectable. . . . [Thus one of the chief features of the theories which actuated the nihilists was the glorification of the lack of tradition in Russia.] We have no traditions; therefore, so far from being inferior on that account to countries who possess them, we are superior to them."

Herzen was a Socialist. He considered that Western Europe was finished, so far as any radical change or regeneration could be expected from that quarter. He looked upon Socialism as a new religion, a new form of Christianity. He thought that Socialism would be to the new world, what Christianity had been to the old world. In working out his parallel, between the decay of the ancient world and the rise of Christianity, the decay of the modern world and the birth of Socialism, he considered that the part played by the invasion of the barbarians in the destruction of the old world would, in the destruction of the modern world, be played by the Russian peasantry; the fundamental principle of whose material existence, namely the Commune, was so near the root idea of the new Christianity.

The central idea of the European idealists of this time, whose ideal was peaceful anarchy, was that the functions of the State should be taken over by the Communes on a basis of mutual and voluntary agreement. The Russian Commune was the very thing needed to effect the change. The instrument which Cavour had said would transform the world was there ready at hand. The Russian peasant as a member of the *Mir*, the community, was a born Socialist. The Russian peasant had only to speak the word and a new social order, based on private barter and exchange, carried on by each individual citizen, and each individual Commune, would arise. The work of Russia, according to Herzen, was to convert the world to a sense of the foolishness of political revolution and of the necessity of social revolution. The whole process of political reform, constitution, representa-

tion, and direct legislation was, he considered, futile. It was not the political institution of the State that needed reform or change, but the State itself that should be destroyed and replaced by a free federation of social communes. The people who should effect the change were the Slavs; the Commune was already there, a ready-made institution, perfectly adapted to take the place of the State.

Such, in brief, were the views of Herzen.

Bakunin shared the views of Herzen, but his chief aim was consistency and logic; and the pursuit of an idea to its logical close. M. Leroy Beaulieu sums him up thus :—

" L'étroit et incorrigible sectaire, le froid logicien, plus glacé et plus dure que les glaces de sa terre natale; Bakounine, systématique comme un géomètre et déclamatoire comme un rhéteur, fanatique de négation, l'esprit plein d'une seule idée et l'âme d'une seule aspiration, maniaque fermé à tout ce qui était étranger à sa folie, inaccessible au doute, au découragement, à toutes les leçons et les déceptions de la vie."

Herzen was the idealist forerunner of nihilism, a great and generous soul, swinging like a pendulum between enthusiasm and despair. Bakunin was the apostle of destruction and anarchy, the cold and sterile incarnation of Russian nihilism.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, in his *Perfect Wagnerite*, compares Wagner's Siegfried to Bakunin ; the spirit of revolt who is to break Wotan's spear, to bring Valhalla and all its gods crashing to the ground, setting free the great waters to flood and clean the world. But the comparison suggests two questions to the thoughtful inquirer. One cannot help asking, when Wotan's spear has been broken, when Valhalla is in ashes, and the earth flooded, what is to happen next? Is the ideal of the destroyer simply destruction, or does he look forward to a new and different order of things that shall arise out of the ashes of the old order ?

In the second place, one cannot help noting, that in the case of Bakunin, the whole idea was a failure. He did not even achieve destruction. So far from destroying the idea of heaven, he did not even destroy the Winter Palace or one police station; his sole positive achievement was his involuntary disorganization of the *International*, the European Socialist organization; but for this, his life-work did not bring forth one single fruitful idea. He was possessed by one idea only, and it crushed him like a

stone. Dostoievski, in his book *The Possessed*, has given us a striking illustration of this type of character.

Herzen republished the articles he had written, after the first two years he had left Russia, in 1850, in books called *From the Other Shore*, and *Letters from France and Italy*. His influence was strongest towards the close of the Crimean War, when public opinion in Russia was aflame with disappointment, and seething with discontent. It was then that he started his newspaper, *The Bell*, in London. Certain suggestions which he made in this organ were adopted by the Drafting Committee of the emancipation reform. His positive programme was simple; it consisted of three points only: freedom of the peasants from slavery, freedom of the Press, and the abolition of corporal punishment. When the emancipation of the serfs was carried out, the main part of the programme was realized, and the question arose what should be done next.

But in the meantime a new generation had sprung up who were determined to answer the question in their own fashion. Between the two generations, the men of the 'forties, to whom Herzen and Bakunin belonged, and the new generation, the men of the 'sixties, there was a clash, a split and a wide difference, and the struggle between the two has been immortalized in Turgeniev's masterpiece, *Fathers and Sons*.

Herzen and Bakunin were the precursors of nihilism. The younger generation, as represented in life by Chernichevski and in fiction by Turgeniev's Bazarov,[1] were its active apostles. But the chief difference between them was this: Herzen and Bakunin were aristocrats; they belonged to the nobility; they were brought up in St. Petersburg and Moscow; the new generation was democratic. Chernichevski was the son of a priest.[2] "Bazarov," wrote Turgeniev, "is the triumph of democracy over aristocracy." The new generation wished to extirpate everything that was romantic, æsthetic, or sentimental; they wished to supplant this by asceticism in manners and "realism" in theory. In order to realize the type the reader has only to turn to Turgeniev's novel. Bazarov, it has been said, is unlike what the young nihilists were in real life; the type is true, none the less, and in any case Bazarov was discussed

[1] The hero of *Fathers and Sons*.
[2] A priest in Russia is very often a peasant.

by the Russians as though he had been a living personality. He is a living type, as much alive, for instance, as Becky Sharp is alive.

The new generation despised the old. Herzen was left in the lurch, and fell between two stools, being deserted both by the old and the new, and Bakunin rallied himself to the new generation. The historical sequence of events in the revolutionary movement is briefly as follows :—

After the Decembrist movement of 1824, the next ebullition was a movement of young literary men, schoolmasters and officers, in 1848, called the Petrashevsti, after their leader, Petrashevski. The movement was platonic and abstract; plans for the emancipation of the serfs and a great deal of abstract philosophy were discussed. It was in reality mere talk; but it was discovered by the police, and the Government, under the impression of the recent revolution in France, punished its members severely. Dostoievski and Danilevski, who were implicated in it, were exiled to Siberia. Dostoievski was an officer in the army; he was consequently punished for treason. They both returned later, convinced Conservatives, and were stigmatized by the revolutionaries as reactionaries.

The generation of 1860 was different. They aimed at social, and not at political revolution. They were not to imitate Europe, but to sweep away the existence of the State by means of the Russian Commune. They looked forward to an agrarian revolution as the means by which their end would be accomplished.

Chernichevski and his fellows were convinced that the peasants would not accept the conditions of the scheme of emancipation. In the meantime the emancipation became law, and the peasants received it with the utmost calm. It was true there was disappointment. It was true that the peasants thought (as they still think to this day) that they were meant to receive the whole of the land, and that the Emperor's true manifesto had been kept back. However, in spite of this, calm prevailed. It was explained by the revolutionaries (the wish being father to the thought) that, according to one clause of the new law, the relations between the landlords and the peasants were to remain unchanged until 1863. The revolutionaries looked forward to a popular rising in 1863.

The educated classes were to prepare the way; a secret

publication called *The Great Russian* was organized with a view to spreading their opinions. Chernichevski was a prime leader in this movement. A society called *Land and Liberty* was formed, whose immediate aim was the organization of an agrarian rising. They boasted of having many members in St. Petersburg, and in the provinces, but this was probably mere talk; the Polish revolutionaries, who were preparing a Polish rebellion, entered into communication with the *Land and Liberty* Society; they wanted their rebellion to come off simultaneously with the agrarian rising.

Herzen, who had a keen grasp of facts and considered the boasting of the *Land and Liberty* Society to be bluff, urged the Poles to wait until the agrarian rising should begin. But the Poles had no intention of waiting; they were in favour of an immediate rising, and so was Bakunin.

Bakunin's career so far had been as follows: In 1848 he had come forward as the prophet of destruction, and had tried to bring about a revolution among the Slavs of Austria and Germany. After this he disappeared for twelve years. He was arrested, twice sentenced to death, sentenced to imprisonment for life in St. Petersburg, but exiled eight years later to Siberia, whence he escaped and fled to America. He reappeared in Europe in 1862, and once more set about the realization of his dream in connection with the Polish rebellion. Bakunin made a naval expedition viâ Stockholm, and an attempt was made to organize a general insurrection of the peasants in the region of the Volga. A spurious proclamation was issued in the shape of an Imperial manifesto, proclaiming universal freedom to all classes, and granting all the land to the peasants without payment, the abolition of conscription and the capitation tax, and the disbanding of the army; the soldiers were to go home and receive free allotments from the land belonging to the State.

Four officers of the army, who belonged to the revolutionary organization, travelled through six provinces distributing copies of the forged manifesto. Four other officers were to raise a revolution in Kazan on the Volga, and, by means of steamers on the Volga and the Oka, to establish communications with the region of the Urals and Perm and Viatka. It all came to nothing. The officers were arrested during the first week of their mission; the Polish rebellion was crushed.

Before going on to subsequent events, it is necessary to say a few words about Chernichevski, whose influence was far wider and deeper than that of Herzen and Bakunin. He was of the people; the son of a priest; he never left Russia. In 1855 he published a treatise on the relations of art and reality; a little later, an essay on the anthropological principle in philosophy, in which he preached materialism, the principle of unity in nature and in man, reducing morality solely to pleasure and utility. In 1860, in the organ of Nekrasov, the poet, he published a translation and a criticism of John Stuart Mill's philosophy, which was in reality a defence of Socialism. In 1863 he published in the same organ anonymously a novel called *Shto dielat?* (What is to be done?). This long and tedious novel had an immense influence on the younger generation. It was the gospel of Russian nihilism. It was written in prison, at St. Petersburg. As far as his ideas were concerned, there was nothing particularly original about Chernichevski. His theories were borrowed from German, French, and English philosophers. But his novel was full of that realistic fervour or mystic realism which was the very thing to act as a spark on the minds of young Russia. He suffered for his forlorn creed, and from 1863 until 1880 he lived in exile in Siberia, after having completed a sentence of seven years' hard labour.

The whole history of the active nihilist movement in Russia, which expressed itself in acts of terrorism, can be summed up in one sentence. The younger generation put into practice what the elder generation had preached: and not only what their immediate forerunners had preached, but the theories which had seethed in intellectual Russia ever since the days of the Empress Catherine. These theories, I repeat once again, were a foreign import, and came from Western Europe. They fell upon a peculiar soil.

I have already earlier in the book dwelt on the speculative audacity of the Russian temperament, its inability to recognize a limit, its final "Why not?" its passion for carrying out an idea to its logical conclusion. This is exactly what occurred here. The younger generation saw that the logical conclusion of what their elders had preached meant terrorism, and they said "Why not?" It meant death to others and death to themselves, and again they said "Why not?"

After the Polish rebellion and the ingenuous schemes of the

Land and Liberty Society had been crushed, a further organization, called the Circle of Eshutin, after one of the students who belonged to it, was started in 1865, for spreading revolutionary propaganda among the people. Some of its members were in favour of peaceful work, but the society soon veered towards terrorism.

In April, 1866, one of its members, Karakozov, attempted to assassinate the Emperor Alexander II. The society was discovered; thirty-four members were tried, and most of them were sent to Siberia.

The next attempt at a revolutionary movement came about in 1870. It was organized by an extraordinary man called Nechaev; a man with a will of iron, unbridled ambition, and complete lack of scruple. He was a student and a teacher; the members of his conspiracy were nearly all of them students in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Bakunin entered into relations with Nechaev, but Nechaev did not hesitate to betray Bakunin or any one else if he thought it suited his purpose. Nechaev's programme was as follows (I will condense it) :—

"The liberation of the people; but as this, in the opinion of the society, can only be attained by a popular revolution, the aim of the society will be to intensify and spread such evils as are likely to bring about a revolution. Popular revolution is not to be according to the European pattern. The destruction of one political order and the substitution of another political order in its place does not suffice. A revolution can only be profitable if it extirpates all existing elements, and all State traditions, and all social classes in Russia.

"No new form is to be organized from above. The task of future generations is the evolution of a future organization modelled on life and on the people. The task of the society consists in thorough, universal and merciless destruction. Therefore, in approaching the people we must unite those elements which have always protested either directly or indirectly against everything connected with the State: the nobility, officialdom, the priesthood, the guilds, the usurers. We must make the *world of robbers* combine; they are the only real revolutionaries in Russia. Our task and our organization is to create an irresistible and crushing force."

This was all to happen in 1869; a propaganda was to be carried

on in St. Petersburg and Moscow, in the provincial cities, among the lower middle class and the theological students; it was to spread thence to the people. On February 19, 1870, the anniversary of the liberation of the serfs, the social revolution was to come about. What happened was this: Nechaev went abroad in the middle of 1869. He declared that everything was ripe in Russia for revolution. He received through Bakunin a sum of money deposited with Herzen. He returned to Russia in September, and organized a small Russian branch of the *International*. Then, in the last days of November, a drama occurred, which exceeded anything that fiction could invent in intensity and brutality. Nechaev forced his disciples to kill one of their fellow-members, Ivanov, who had opposed him. The members of the society were arrested, and Nechaev fled to Switzerland, whence he was extradited two years later as a common criminal. This was the end of the revolutionary movement of the 'sixties, and any one who wishes to gather the kind of ideas which were rife at that time, and the kind of people who played a part in these movements, cannot do better than read Dostoievski's novel *The Possessed;* the hero of this book is a kind of Nechaev. But even this tremendous book scarcely exceeds the grim facts of the reality. Eighty-four people were implicated in the Nechaev trial. The main result of it was the dissipation of the dream of social revolution. Two new theories took its place among the partisans of revolution; one was this, "Social revolution is impossible; let us make social *propaganda*"; the other, "*Social* revolution is impossible; let us make a *political* revolution."

The chief advocate of the first theory was a man called Lavrov, and the chief advocate of the second theory was Bakunin, who discarded his dream of a social Slav revolution and succeeded in preserving his influence over the young generation. Lavrov was in favour of making propaganda in the village Communes, and Bakunin in favour of making propaganda by means of riots; but both sides were agreed on one point, that it was necessary to *go to the people*, whether they wished to instigate riots or to carry on a peaceful propaganda of Socialism. They must work among the people, in order to get to know them. A movement having this aim arose. It consisted of isolated circles and groups of workers scattered over different parts of Russia.

People of all classes joined the movement; young men and women of the highest aristocratic families. They displayed absolute self-sacrifice, and, as Stepniak says, it was a religious rather than a political movement. But they accomplished practically nothing. They did not succeed in reaching the people, and they soon became aware that the people's ideas were totally different from their own. The people expected freedom to come from above, from the Emperor, in some distant future, and they were resolved to wait patiently for it. The nihilists were forced to recognize that their work, as propaganda, was quite hopeless.

Indirectly, this movement of popular propaganda, which lasted from 1873 to 1874, had an influence, a disastrous influence on the future generations of the educated middle class in Russia. The ideal of "living for the people" outlived the reality of the brief epoch of practical propaganda; the youth of the coming generations looked upon "living for the people," as we shall see later, as the one possible ideal: only, in the future, there was this great difference: the active exponents of the theory grew less and less, and the platonic preachers of the theory grew more and more numerous, till at last "living for the people" grew to mean to live for yourself, and not to live for any one else.

For the present, the revolutionaries changed their tactics. They realized that the kind of travelling propaganda they had hitherto adopted was futile, that educated people should settle permanently in the villages, that their activity should be centralized. A new organization was started with this aim in 1876, called by the same name as one of the earlier revolutionary organizations, *Land and Liberty*. Their aim was to talk to the people in a language which they could understand; to set before them social and political ideals which harmonized with their traditions and their aspirations. They preached the appropriation of land by those who tilled it, and liberty for every one to manage his own affairs.

But here, again, they failed. They *talked down* to the people; and the people, with its flair and its common sense, realized this at once. This arose from their fundamental ignorance of what the people were like, their inability to do, what Pushkin had done quite naturally, namely, *to love what the people loved.*

"Naturally enough," writes Professor Miliukov, "the eager-

ness of the revolutionaries cooled just in proportion as it became clear that the ' people's ideals ' were too peculiar to be used as an agitation or a propaganda."

People are only just now beginning to realize in Russia that it was the people's ideas which were too sound to be used by a propaganda, and that it was the ideas of the political missionaries which were too foolish and remote from reality to have any effect on the people. In the country, the revolutionaries found their work was hopeless, unless they had resort to charlatanism and mystification, means such as forged manifestos (one was issued in South Russia), or the bringing forward of a Tsar impostor (this latter plan was seriously discussed). The propaganda was shifted from the country to the towns. But here, although the working classes were far more receptive, they failed to accomplish anything, because they failed to understand the people whom they were talking to. " The most advanced workmen," writes Professor Miliukov, " found the pamphlets spread by the revolutionists among the peasants too elementary and too childish. ' We are not peasants,' they asserted—to the utter horror of their popular leaders, *in whose eyes a working man was merely a bad kind of peasant.*"

The italics are mine. I have emphasized this sentence because it seems to me to contain the whole gist of the matter. The revolutionaries failed to understand the working man, just as they had failed to understand the peasant.

The result was the growth of heresies in the revolutionary party. In 1879, the working men of St. Petersburg founded an organization of their own, from which they excluded intellectuals. And in the Society of *Land and Liberty* a formidable split arose also. One group of this party, the city group, struck out a new line. They abandoned the ideal of working among the people with the aim of paving the way for, and eventually bringing about a social revolution; they adopted terrorism as a means. A nucleus of their members formed themselves into an Executive Committee of Socialist Revolutionaries; their object was to wage systematic war on the Government.

" In the view of the terrorists themselves," writes Professor Miliukov, " terrorism was only an incidental feature—one of the means of the struggle. The chief question was whether or no the struggle should be political or economic." And it was

this question rather than terrorism which brought dissension into the *Land and Liberty* Party. The split was final, because those who were in favour of working among the people and creating a popular movement were opposed to a political revolution, and considered that the granting of a constitution would delay the social revolution. A social revolution must be prepared by riots and propaganda. Both these means had failed. The more advanced men of the party argued that a change of tactics was necessary; that the only form it could take was terrorism. The others replied that the terrorists forgot the people altogether, while concentrating their energies on terroristic acts. Besides which, even if the terrorists succeeded, what would be the result? The people were unprepared, and could not be otherwise than unprepared; the only thing which could happen would be a change of Government; the transfer of the power into the hands of the Liberals.

In 1878, there were fruitless negotiations between the representatives of the Zemstva and the revolutionaries. In 1879, a new party, called the *Will of the People*, was formed, with political revolution for its end, and terrorism for its means; in the autumn it declared itself independent of its parent, the *Land and Liberty* Society, and undertook a terrorist campaign—on the lines of that planned by the Executive Committee, but on a larger scale. This ended in the brutal murder of the Emperor Alexander II, on March 13, 1881.

So far from anything being gained by this act, the nihilist movement came to an end—for the time, although its methods, and some of its creeds, were destined to reappear in another shape later on.

It will perhaps now not be altogether superfluous to sum up the chief points of the nihilist movement.

In the first place, as far as the theory of it was concerned, its philosophy, its fundamental principles, its *moralische idee*, it started out with the aim of borrowing nothing from outside, and from alien countries, of emancipating itself from tradition; in practice, in reality it took up the burden of a refrain which all Western Europe had caught, and which all Western Europe had more or less grown tired of. There was nothing new, nothing original in the philosophy of Russian nihilism. It consisted solely in the theories of certain Western

philosophers carried to their logical conclusion and executed in practice.

This is what is native, original, indigenous, and peculiar to the movement. The Russians carried out in practice what the Westerners preached in theory. The Westerners said, "That way lies dynamite," and stopped. The Russians said, "That way lies dynamite," and went on. They made dynamite, and used it. In preaching and practising the doctrine of negation and of annihilation they were imbued with a mystical and religious fervour; they had their martyrs; they were ready to undergo; they underwent the extreme limit of self-sacrifice. The preaching and spreading of their negative creed became a positive religion.

To prepare the people for the advent of a social revolution which would destroy the old order and make way for the new, was an article of this positive faith. Their propaganda among the people was absolutely fruitless; because they were prevented either from enthusiasm, or by wearing blinkers of some kind, from ever seeing what the people were really like, and from perceiving that the people had already a definite philosophy of their own which, although it does not express itself in abstract ideas and in theories, was intensely real, and the result of the accumulated experience of centuries.

This has always been the great mistake of all the revolutionaries in Russia. They have said to the people, "We love you, we will die for you, we will devote our lives to bringing about changes that shall better your condition." But the people have answered, "We don't want your love, because you are not the kind of people we can look up to, and if you knew us, you would know why."

Finally, I must add a word about Herzen, who was the forerunner of this destructive movement. It must not for a moment be thought that Herzen was a kind of Moriarty in the epic of Sherlock Holmes, who, living in mysterious seclusion, held the threads of a thousand crimes. Herzen preached change, reform, the destruction of the old order; but he was an idealist; he hated revolution. "I know you detest the word 'revolution,' but there is nothing else to do," Bakunin wrote to him. Now the whole point of the matter lies here. Bakunin's later ideas were all borrowed from Herzen's writings; the difference between the

two men was that Bakunin was ready to carry out those ideas in practice, "here and now" and to the bitter end. "Logic is the only thing that is powerful," he said. "Let us be logical, if not for the present, at least for the future."

Herzen saw that as well as logic there were such things as facts; that to carry certain ideas into practice at once would, so far from being profitable, be disastrous. But what he did not realize, and what very few people in the world seem to realize, was this: If you preach a creed, and a negative creed, even if you clearly see yourself that your aim cannot possibly be realized immediately, this will not prevent others from being influenced by your preaching, and from attempting to put your ideas into practice *at once*. You sow a seed; if the seed is fire you cannot be surprised if the harvest is the whirlwind. Now Bakunin and his followers not only saw clearly that the harvest would be the whirlwind, but that was the very harvest they desired. The only thing they failed to recognize was that the forces they let loose reacted on themselves; that it was they and not the world who would be destroyed by the whirlwind which they had created.

But Herzen, when the Russian people, with that mixture of mysticism, realism, and the power of going the whole hog which is peculiar to them, put his ideas into practice and punctuated them with dynamite, was disappointed and disgusted. He lived to see the first-fruits of his propaganda. When, in 1866, Karakozov attempted to assassinate the Emperor Alexander II, he wrote an article repudiating such methods as barbarous, and from that moment his newspaper, *The Bell*, ceased to have any influence. The subscribers to the newspaper were more logical than its editor, because the terrorist acts which Herzen blamed were the only possible fruits of his teaching.

It is this very inconsistency, this divergence between his hopes and his despair at the manner in which they were being fulfilled, his inability to grasp that one was the inevitable result of the other, which take our sympathy. He was inconsistent because he was human; because his hopes were huge and his disillusion immense; because, like the man in a fairy tale, he spoke the words of power which released the genii from the chest, and was unable to control the demon he had freed; because he realized this and saw his dreams of regeneration burst like a bubble; be-

cause he lived to see to what use his ideals could be put in the hands of a single-purposed and completely unscrupulous criminal such as Nechaev. He died at Nice in 1859. But he lived too long. He had lived to see his holy ideals, his faith, and the treasure of his soul, bartered in the market-place and used as a bauble by knaves to decoy fools. And he is one of the few men of whom it could be said:—

"Mais la mort fuit encor sa grande âme trompée."

Bakunin died at Berne in 1878. Neither Herzen nor Bakunin had lived to see the ultimate results of the movement they had set going, namely, the murder of Alexander II and the inevitable reaction.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CONSEQUENCES OF EMANCIPATION (*continued*)

LITERATURE

THE "Epoch of the Great Reforms" in Russia was destined to bear fruits which not only concerned the political fortune of Russia, but the intellectual and moral life of Europe. It stabbed the Russian soul; and out of the wound came a great outburst of literature which enlarged and enriched the literature of the world. The three great children of the epoch were Tolstoi, Dostoievski, and Turgeniev. The work of Tolstoi and Turgeniev obtained recognition abroad immediately and opened for many the doors of Russian life. In Pushkin, Russia found a Mozart, a poet who, with divine ease, poured out melodies which expressed the joy and the melancholy of its heart. In Gogol, Russia had found its ideal story-teller and humorist: a man who tenderly laughed at its faults, and loved them all the same; a man who told the nation stories by the fireside, the stories which it could never tire of, and jokes which could never grow stale. In Tolstoi, Russia found a great epic painter, an artist who painted panoramas with the brush of a Velasquez, who created human beings that belong to life, and not to literature, so that the reader classes them and their doings with his own experience rather than with the memories of his adventures in bookland. In Dostoievski, Russia found a sombre Titan, who laid bare the Russian soul in the depths of its agony, and broke a jar of myrrh, made of pity, precious beyond rubies, over its gaping wounds. In Turgeniev, Russia found an artist who made a picture gallery of distinguished and somewhat idealized portraits, out of whose stately casements there were views on the fields, the rivers, the pleasant landscape; and leaning out of the windows of his picture gallery you heard

the peasants gossiping beside the wall, or the children telling each other stories about bogies; and in the twilight you caught the whir of the wild-ducks' wings, and in the night you heard the long, piercing songs of the village.

There is little profit in classifying these great writers in order of merit. In the first place, there is a question of individual taste in the matter, in the second place there is a conflict between Western European and Russian standards of criticism, and, in the third place, few English readers have read their works in the original tongue.

In a book I wrote on Russian literature I said that at the present day, in the public opinion of Russia, Tolstoi and Dostoievski stood, as a rule, far higher as writers than Turgeniev. This remark (as I knew it would be) was the cause of much misunderstanding. I was accused of not realizing the significance of artistic merit, and of being blind to Turgeniev's qualities. At the same time I cannot help thinking that those who are capable of appreciating the beauty of Turgeniev's prose as he wrote it, the rhythm and melody of his sentences, the epithets he uses, the turns of his dialogue, the music and cadence of his speech, in a word his *style*, which is perhaps the chief factor of his genius, and which is dimmed in translation, have perhaps a fuller idea of Turgeniev's genius than the most enthusiastic admirer of translations of his work. There is no vexed question of Turgeniev in Russia (any more than there is a vexed question of George Eliot or of Tennyson in England). Everybody in Russia has read Turgeniev, and everybody will continue to read Turgeniev. His work is a part of the intellectual food of the Russian man and especially of the Russian adolescence. Nobody has ever dreamt of disputing his qualities, or of questioning the mastery and the spell of his art, his charm, and the manifold beauties of his work, any more than they have dreamed of blaming him for not possessing the qualities which were foreign to his temperament and to his genius. Most Russians regard the work of Tolstoi and of Dostoievski as being more important, as a contribution to their national inheritance, and to the world's literature; but because they consider that Tolstoi, with his tremendous outlook and range, and Dostoievski with his unfathomable insight, accomplished greater and more stupendous achievements, it does not mean that they do not appreciate to the full the value and the beauty of Turgeniev's art.

They of course appreciate it better than we can. And if the English critic retorts by saying, " I think art such as Turgeniev's a higher achievement in itself than Tolstoi's epics, however comprehensive, or than Dostoievski's records, however deep and poignant," there is nothing further to discuss, and no further answer to be made, any more than there would be to an Englishman to whom a Russian would say, " Although you English consider the work of Fielding and Meredith to be more important and significant than that of W. Pater,[1] art such as Pater's seems to me a greater achievement in itself than the work of Fielding and Meredith, however much bigger their achievement may be." The determination of such standards is based on the taste of the individual.

In any case I do not wish to enter into a controversy on that point here. Tolstoi, Dostoievski, and Turgeniev are all three of them great writers of vital importance to Russian literature and to the student of Russian life.

Turgeniev's three novels, *Fathers and Sons*, *Virgin Soil*, and *A Nest of Gentlefolk*, are of inestimable value from an historical point of view, as giving a picture of the 'sixties. His *Sportsman's Sketches* gives us vivid and poignant pictures of the life of the peasants in the days before the emancipation. One Russian critic compared this book, for the effect it had, to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, although, as Prince Volkonski points out, in Turgeniev's book there is no premeditated didacticism. The book is the masterpiece among books which deal with peasant life from the *outsider's* point of view, and in which the outsider's impressions play a justifiable part. The sketches are as vivid as those of Maupassant and Kipling, and they are full of that kind of poetry which comes from the written word being saturated with the light and shadow and the smell of nature.

I have already mentioned Bazarov in talking of the nihilists. Bazarov is the most famous of Turgeniev's creations, both in Russia and in Western Europe. Bazarov is indeed a vexed question. He always was, and he always will be. Dostoievski found the type unreal. But the fact that the character was discussed as though he were a human being proves that it was endowed with a singular vitality. It is quite possible that Bazarov was not at all like the individual nihilists of the 'sixties, and that this jarred on

[1] I of course do not mean to suggest that there is the faintest resemblance between Pater and Turgeniev.

the nerves of contemporary readers who were in the movement and knew the type first-hand. He is certainly unlike the latter-day social revolutionaries. And yet as a type of young Russia imbued with new ideas—new to him, that is to say—and with negative ideas, ruthless and unflinching in their pursuit, contemptuous of all barriers, Bazarov still remains one of the most remarkable creations of Russian fiction. Perhaps one is prejudiced in his favour by the noble art with which his death-scene is dealt with, the poignant undercurrent of feeling, the manly pathos, the tears for mortal things that Turgeniev stirs, with the reserve and economy of a great artist, and which make the last chapter of the book one of the supreme things in the world's fiction. In any case no student of Russian fiction and Russian life can afford to overlook or to neglect Bazarov. He was the watchword of an epoch, the synthesis of a generation.

Another of Turgeniev's achievements, which is also historically significant and interesting, is his gallery of women characters. Not only are his women characters—Mariana in *Virgin Soil*, Liza in the *Nest of Gentlefolk*—artistically triumphs of ideal portraiture—although here again they have not the superliterary quality of Tolstoi's women—but they are the first expression in literature of certain feminine qualities which are peculiarly Russian: the quality a Russian woman has of sharing to the full a man's interests, without necessarily ceasing to be feminine, and without neglecting her home life.

"In his novel *On the Eve*," writes Prince Volkonski, "Tourgeniev gave the first portrait of a woman whose interests extend beyond the exclusive circle of her home-life. Helen is the first woman in our literature who in her love for her husband finds strength enough to become his intellectual companion, not only in his family life, but in his work outside the family. She is a representative of those noble specimens of Russian female character who, without abdicating home, transfuse their love into their husband's whole existence; who, without ceasing to be wife and mother, with equal intrepidity follow the masters of their heart into the abstract regions of science, into the struggles of practical life, into the gloom of Siberian exile. Later this was exaggerated; scientific interests became a sort of protest against family life and brought forth specimens of girls who made it a point of honour to be anything except wives or mothers."

Turgeniev's types of women are as profoundly Russian as Meredith's women are English. Mariana, Liza, and Helen belong to the same sphere as Clara Middleton, Carinthia Jane, and Rhoda Fleming. He is less successful with the other type of woman he deals with, the Circe type, false through and through, subtle, deceitful, alluring, and fatal. There is something a little bit conventional about them; they all seem to be built on one pattern; to belong to bookland rather than to life.

Lastly there is another type, which is significant and plays a large part in Russian life, and that is the *génie sans portefeuille*: the man who makes others believe in himself by his own words, and while himself sharing the delusion of the belief he has created in others, breaks down when it comes to action and is never able to achieve anything. He is a Hamlet without the ghost: a Hamlet who convinces everybody, while he is speaking, that he has been born to set the world aright, but who is unable in practice to take a single step towards that end. The most vivid character of this kind in Turgeniev's books is Rudin. In reading about him we feel the spell of his personality; he carries us away by his eloquence and his good intentions; and at the same time we feel that nothing will come of it; we pity the girl who should fall in love with him, because we know he will say more than he means, and make her expect more than he will ever be able to realize. This is what happens, and Rudin ends, after sliding down the rungs of the ladder, in a barricade in Paris, still carrying his audience with him, until he is shot.

About Tolstoi it is not necessary to say much. Tolstoi belongs to the world. Everybody can read him. His books are well translated and they lose but little in translation. Moreover, everything that needs saying about them has been admirably said, especially in English. Nothing, for instance, could be more just nor more brilliant as criticism than the article which appeared on Tolstoi in the "Literary Supplement" of *The Times* after his death. His life, as everybody knows, was sharply divided into two parts: his career as an artist, as a writer of books and of stories, and his career as a propagandist: as a prophet of certain ideas concerning religion, life, and property. During this latter phase he preached the uselessness of art and the futility of great works of art, such as Shakespeare's tragedies, Beethoven's symphonies, etc.

From the cradle to the grave there was a consistent vein of inconsistency in Tolstoi's character: he was well aware of it himself, and the proof of this is the manner in which he confessed it, by leaving his home, and making for a monastery shortly before his death, an act which invested his end with so tragic a solemnity. He had preached the renunciation of property, the severance of man from all his possessions, and he had not (owing to his circumstances) been able or willing to carry out his doctrine in practice. But he hankered after the ideal, and as he felt death approaching, he made the final effort to be true to his principles, and death met him on the way. It is owing to the vein of inconsistency in his character that, even after Tolstoi had definitely proclaimed the futility of literature and art, he went on, nevertheless, making works of art. *Resurrection* may not equal his early work as a whole, but none the less nobody else could have written it but Tolstoi; and certain of the scenes in it he never surpassed. It is not my intention here to dwell on the literary merits of Tolstoi, which are patent to all the world, nor to discuss the propaganda of his later years. But besides being a great artist, who has left us a host of masterpieces, Tolstoi was a factor in Russian history, a landmark in the life of the Russian people.

As a personality, he stood out in Russian life among his contemporaries as a man who always dared to say what he thought, however violently his opinions conflicted with the views either of those in authority or of his contemporaries in general. By so doing he gave to the whole country, at a time when scarcely anybody dared to speak his mind, a signal example of civic courage. The result was that nobody dared to touch him. He was excommunicated by the Church, but, as Mr. Chesterton pointed out in a luminously sensible article, it would have been strange had he not been excommunicated, since the cardinal point of his creed was that the Church was not only wrong, but perniciously wrong. He expressed his opinion in terms which to any member of his Church must have been grossly offensive and rankly blasphemous. In any case he was a seeker after truth, and in his restless striving after an ideal which he never realized, his many contradictions and inconsistencies, his imperious desire, his self-dissatisfaction, his strength and his weakness, he is typical of Russia. His death made less im-

pression on the mass of the educated population than that of Dostoievski.

As to Dostoievski's work I have said all I had to say elsewhere. As far as Russia is concerned, apart from the merits and defects of his work, the great point about Dostoievski is that, after Pushkin, he was the first great Russian writer who understood what the Russian people felt, and who believed in the people, recognized their ideals, and found them good. That is to say, he achieved exactly that which the nihilists failed to achieve, although they sacrificed their lives in the effort. He went to the people. He not only went, but he got there. He understood the people's religion and ideals, and he shared them. When he was sent to Siberia, for having been implicated in the plot of 1848, he said, "They were right to condemn us: the people would have blamed us." During the years he spent in prison in Siberia, he came face to face with people and shared their life. In his *Letters from a Dead House* he has left us the most precious record of the Russian poor—their feelings, their outlook, their code—that exists.

I was told by a schoolmaster in a village of Tambov, that the peasants who could read, liked this book. They said the book "spoke to them." This did not surprise me, because what the peasants recognized and felt was that somebody not only understood them, but agreed with them. There is something fraternal in his books, which causes any one who is miserable, even in reading his most tragic and gloomy stories, to feel better for having read them. And nothing would appeal so much to a Russian peasant as this.

Dostoievski was one of the first people in Russia to realize that the nihilists in "going to the people" and trying to sow their ideas among them, were setting about the matter in the wrong way. He realized that the people had its own creed and its own ideals, and that the nihilists could not understand what these were; and that the people, could they understand the ideals of the nihilists, would probably repudiate them. This is the reason why, when Dostoievski returned from Siberia, he was an ardent opponent of all revolution. He was accused of being a reactionary; and if reaction meant opposition to the creeds and methods of nihilism, then he was a reactionary. But this does not mean that he approved of reactionary methods of

government. It means only that, as Pushkin before him, he understood the *people*, shared their ideals, and trusted them. There is as yet in English no complete translation of Dostoievski's work. His most important book, *The Brothers Karamazov*, is unknown. Even the French translation of it is mutilated and hopelessly inadequate. Until such an adequate and complete translation is made, his work will not obtain recognition in England, and the praise that is accorded to him will doubtless seem exaggerated.

To the student of Russia, Dostoievski's books are valuable as a revelation of the Russian soul. The phrase "reading history by flashes of lightning" occurs to one. Dostoievski reveals the Russian soul by flashes of lightning, and lays bare its innermost secrets. But the watchwords of his works were faith, hope, and love, and the whole of Russia felt this. That is perhaps why, when Tolstoi died, they felt they had lost a great man, one of their national glories, but when Dostoievski died they felt (from Tolstoi, who said so, to the man in the street) that they had lost a friend and a brother. A friend of mine who lives in St. Petersburg told me that when Tolstoi died he asked his cook (a woman) what was the opinion in the market about Tolstoi's death. She said, "We think he ought to be buried like a dog." There was no such dispute over Dostoievski's death; and no Russian ever had a funeral attended by so many different classes of the population, linked by so deep a common sorrow. That is why Dostoievski is supremely important in the history of the Russian people. He was the people's friend, and he loved what they loved. He expressed this love better than Tolstoi or Turgeniev, or than any other writer, since the death of Pushkin.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT AND ITS COURSE

WE have already seen that after the death of Alexander II, the project of reform, which had been drafted by Loris Melikov, was shelved and Russia entered into a period of reaction which lasted practically until the war of 1904.

The Emperor Alexander III did what he could to correct the abuses of officialdom, but the task was too great for one man. I am not going to touch the details of this period, nor am I going to deal with the movement for reform which started among the Zemstva, and by the autumn of 1905 had kindled the whole of popular educated opinion in Russia. The reader will find a detailed account of this movement in Mr. Bernard Pares' exhaustive volume *Russia and Reform*;[1] but I will attempt to indicate in briefest manner possible how it was that the revolutionary movement came about, and to trace the barest outline of its course.

When the Emperor Nicholas II came to the throne in 1894, and the Zemstvo of Tver, in congratulating the Emperor on his accession, petitioned that the Zemstvo, as representing the needs of the people, might have access to the throne, and that the law as the expression of the Imperial will should not be violated or made dependent on the whims of local officials, they were told to put away all their "senseless dreams."

The following is an account of the matter in *The Times*:—

"Whatever doubts may have been felt or affected as to the policy of Nicholas II were yesterday [January 17/29, 1895] very decisively settled by a particularly clear and unequivocal announcement from his own lips. St. Petersburg is at present crowded with delegates from every part of the Empire charged

[1] Constable, 1907.

with the duty of congratulating the Tsar upon his marriage. More than six hundred deputations, each composed of three or four members, representing the nobility, the military classes, and the Zemstvos. . . . One hundred and eighty-two of these deputations were yesterday received by His Majesty, whose speech upon the occasion is a model of vigour and brevity. Advancing a few steps, the Tsar pronounced in a strong clear voice, and with a remarkably resolute manner, the following words: 'I am pleased to see here the representatives of all classes assembled to express their feelings of loyalty. I believe in the sincerity of those sentiments which have always been characteristic of every Russian. But I am aware that in certain meetings of the Zemstvos voices have lately been raised by persons carried away by absurd illusions as to the participation of the Zemstvo representatives in matters of internal government. Let all know that, in devoting all my strength to the welfare of the people, I intend to protect the principle of autocracy as firmly and unswervingly as did my late and never-to-be-forgotten father."

Thus Pobiedonostsev's policy prevailed; and reform, instead of being initiated from above, and gradually filtering through the country, was, as the Emperor Alexander II so clearly foresaw, obtained by pressure from below; and although it was given and not taken in 1905, the gift came too late and the result was bloodshed, civil war, mutiny, anarchy, riots, terrorism, three years of tumultuous disorder, "fire and sword, red ruin, and the breaking up of laws." Thus there came about a revolution which, although unlike other revolutions, it did not end in destroying the existing order of things and making something new, nevertheless proved to be a prolonged though abortive crisis, which not only shook the country and exercised a profound influence on Russia and Russian affairs, but also profoundly modified the actual form of government. In a word, the main cause of the revolutionary movement was the discontent of public opinion arising from a reaction of disillusion subsequent to the sanguine hopes raised by the epoch of reform; and the universal disillusion and disappointment were caused by the action of the Government which, instead of continuing the work of reform initiated by Alexander II (which had been intended as a prelude to further and wider reforms), had taken the opposite line and had gone backwards instead of forwards.

The two factors which precipitated the crisis were the extreme

reactionary policy of V. K. von Pleve, Minister of the Interior, and the Russo-Japanese War. Pleve, as Minister of the Interior, succeeded a Minister who was murdered—Sipiagin. Pleve saw clearly that the seeds of revolution were bearing fruit, and recognized the danger of the situation. His policy was to nip the plant in the bud. When that should be accomplished he was not averse to attempting administrative reform in the shape of wider schemes of education.

But before making any attempt at reform he was determined to extirpate the revolution. He remained in office two years and four months (1902–4). His policy was as much directed against the *constitutional* movement, which was centred and developing in the Zemstva and among the Liberal gentry and the professional classes, as it was against the *revolutionary* movement which was seething underground. He fought the constitutional movement by attacking the Zemstva and restricting their powers and functions by artificial means. He put in force special measures which limited their action, he dismissed such of the Zemstvo leaders as displeased him from their posts, and dealt with some by means of administrative exile.

As far as the peasants were concerned, he opposed the conclusions of the special committees which had been at work for three years (and had produced eighty-five printed volumes of local investigation) on the needs of the peasantry—because the conclusions of most of the committees pointed to the necessity of enlarging, developing, and strengthening the powers of local self-governing institutions such as the Zemstvo.

He also not only succeeded in irritating the artisan class by the introduction of special police regulations with regard to them, but he was unconsciously instrumental in spreading Socialist propaganda among them, by setting Father Gapon at the head of a club of factory hands in St. Petersburg, who were supposed, by means of public lectures, to acquire education, and to be led to look to the Government for support against their employers. But Gapon played a double game, and, relying on the protection of the police, he cautiously led the workmen's club into the channel of Socialism. Pleve probably ended by suspecting Gapon's falseness, and it is said that he even gave orders for his arrest, but he was himself murdered before they were carried out.

The net result of Plevè's policy was that he exasperated public discontent without taking any steps to remedy the evils which caused it. The public discontent found violent expression in excess and murders, the most notable of which were the attempt to assassinate the Governor-General of Vilna, von Vahl, in May, 1902; the murder of the Governor-General of Finland, N. I. Bobrikov, in June, 1904; and the murder of certain police officials in Warsaw in April, 1904.

In 1903, in April, at Kishinev, and in September in Homel, anti-Jewish riots took place—"Pogroms." According to the official figures, 45 men[1] were killed at Kishinev, 74 severely wounded, 350 slightly injured: 600 shops were plundered, and 700 Jewish houses; the survivors incurred material damage amounting to at least £100,000. At Homel 7 men were killed, many were injured, and about 200 shops and houses were plundered.

In both cases the actual cause of the riots is somewhat difficult to determine. The reader will find a detailed and impartial account of the Kishinev riot and its causes in the Memoirs of Prince Urusov, who was afterwards Governor in Kishinev, which have been translated into English.[2]

Prince Urusov, who is certainly the most competent authority, owing to his personal experience, and the access he had to documentary authorities, both locally and in St. Petersburg, is of the opinion that they were not directly instigated by Pleve, but that the Government was morally responsible for the riots by the protection and encouragement it gave to local anti-Jewish agitators. In both cases no steps were taken by the local police authorities *to stop the riots while they were going on, or to prevent them beforehand.* The idea quickly spread both in Russia and abroad that the Government was directly responsible for them: and they had serious political results. They played a decisive part in throwing the Jewish element in Russia into the arms of the revolution.

After the Kishinev riot the Jewish "Bund" was formed, a society in which the Jewish youth united and which developed

[1] Prince Urusov, the Liberal member of the first Duma, whose speech on the subject made a great sensation in June, 1906, stated the number of killed to be forty-two.

[2] Prince Urusov, *Memoirs of a Russian Governor.* Harper Brothers. London, 1898.

rapidly in Poland, the south and north-west districts of Russia, and the Baltic provinces. The Bund was saturated with the revolutionary spirit, and found support in the various socialistic and revolutionary organizations which were fermenting underground, and which came out into the open everywhere with socialist manifestos as soon as war was declared with Japan.

So Pleve, far from nipping the revolutionary movement in the bud while it was underground, succeeded merely in enlarging its field, and in preparing all over Russia a soil favourable for its spread. In the professional classes, among the workmen, and among the peasants, his action created a spirit of discontent and criticism which is the forerunner of revolutionary movements.

Pleve realized, after he had been in office for some months, that it would be impossible to nip the revolutionary movement while it was still underground, and therefore, with singular short-sightedness, he welcomed the war with Japan, which he thought would distract the attention of public opinion from internal affairs.

The war with Japan came about owing to the sudden *volte-face* in Russia's policy with regard to the Far East, when the Government decided to adopt the aggressive policy of Bezobrazov, instead of the peaceful policy of development which had been initiated and followed by Witte. It will be to Count Witte's lasting credit as a statesman that he saw clearly in this matter. As far back as the time of the Russo-Chinese operations he stated, with regard to the occupation of Manchuria, that Russia was not in a fit state to carry on an aggressive policy.

In the beginning of 1903, five months before he retired from the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a year before the war, he expressed himself clearly on the subject in a report on his journey to the Far East. He argued thus :—

(*a*) That he did not consider a conflict with Japan to be inevitable, because, owing to the building of the Manchurian railway, it was possible that Russia and Japan might come to an agreement on the basis of commercial interests, which are the chief factors in obviating international armed conflicts. There was, therefore, reason to think that a peaceful solution of the questions at issue might be arrived at, on a basis of this kind, in the near future.

(*b*) If such a hope were groundless, it was in any case imperatively necessary to defer the conflict, and to attempt to find at least a temporary solution, a compromise, which would satisfy Japan with regard to Korea. Because an armed conflict with Japan would, Count Witte said, in his opinion, prove a great misfortune at the present time. It was necessary that Russia should get ready. Even, he said, if it were a choice between an armed conflict with Japan and a total cession of Korean interests to Japan the latter would be the lesser evil of the two.

The above is a very brief summary of Witte's views as expressed in his report. He was against war, and he thought that every effort should be made to avoid it; he foresaw that if war did come about, it would weigh heavily on Russia. It did. It cost Russia in men about 200,000 killed and wounded, and nearly 2½ milliards of roubles, besides a loss of international prestige.

But such were not the views of Pleve. He considered, and expressed himself in this sense to Kuropatkin, that unless there were a victorious war, it would be impossible to check the revolution. Had the war been victorious, his policy might have been justified; but it was not; it had exactly the contrary effect to that which Pleve counted on. Instead of distracting the people from revolutionary ideas, it acted like a wind, which blew the revolutionary sparks into a flame, and caused public opinion to pass from discontent to fury. Popular anger expressed itself in action, and on June 15, 1904, Pleve was assassinated by the orders of the Social Revolutionaries. His death did not raise a ripple of regret in the public opinion of Russia; on the contrary, public opinion either tacitly or openly universally condoned the deed. During three months after his death nobody was appointed in his place. In September, 1904, Prince Sviatopolk-Mirski was appointed Minister of the Interior.

Prince Mirski's policy was totally opposed to that of Pleve. He inaugurated a policy of tolerance and latitude, whose underlying idea was that the Government, in order to accomplish fruitful work, must give proof of sincerity, good-will, and confidence towards society, class institutions, and the people. He was prepared to extend the principle of self-government by letting the town and country councils perform their functions without outside interference, and by giving them as free a hand as possible.

The new policy expressed itself in the recall from exile of many of the Zemstvo leaders, who had been banished by Pleve, and by the relaxation of the stringent Press laws. Russia enjoyed under this Ministry a larger freedom of the Press than has ever been the case before or since. A general Zemstvo Congress was authorized to take place in St. Petersburg. It was held under the presidency of Shipov from November 6th to 9th (19 to 21 November, N.S.), 1904.

In eleven clauses the Congress asked for reform. It demanded that the "supreme power should be able to freely summon elected representatives of the people" to take part in the Government. At the close of the Congress, a number of petitions were sent in to the Emperor, which, in guarded terms, asked that the principles laid down in the St. Petersburg Congress might be adopted.

The Emperor summoned a council, in which all his chief Ministers took part, among whom were Pobiedonostsev and Witte. This resulted in a Government manifesto and a ukase to the Senate. The manifesto deprecated the efforts of the Zemstvo, and designated them as an attempt to demolish the pillars of the State; the ukase to the Senate, in eight clauses, gave promises of reform, such as the widening of the scope of self-governing institutions, judicial reforms, and the revision of the Press laws and of all exceptional laws.

A clause, introducing the elective principle into the Council of Empire, namely, the first step towards constitutional government, was struck out. On this point Prince Mirski offered his resignation, but it was not at once accepted. His influence was practically overruled. From this moment onwards a double struggle began towards the overthrow of the existing regime:

(*a*) A constitutional movement headed by the Zemstvo leaders.

(*b*) A revolutionary movement headed by a revolutionary committee sitting in Paris.

A detailed account of the first will be found in Mr. Pares' *Russia and Reform*, chapter xiv. Documents for the inner history of the purely revolutionary movement are as yet wanting, but the following bare and curtailed table of events will give the reader some idea of what happened:

28 November, 1904. Demonstration of students on the Nevski in front of the Kazan Cathedral: 42 wounded, 132

arrests. Prince Viazemski, a member of the Council of Empire, was banished to the country for a year, for interfering.

1–5 December, 1904. Street disturbances in Moscow, ending in the closing of the university.

12 December. Social revolutionary disturbances at Radur. A colonel killed.

13 December–4 January. Strike in Baku district.

3 January, 1905. Strike of workmen in the Putilov Works at St. Petersburg. An attempt to murder General Trepov in Moscow.

7 January. Further workmen's strike in St. Petersburg. Railway strike in the St. Petersburg district.

9 January (22 January, N.S.). A procession of workmen, organized by Father Gapon, marched to the Winter Palace; the troops dispersed the crowd and ultimately fired. 76 killed, 223 wounded.

18 January. Prince Mirski resigned and was succeeded by Bulygin as Minister, but General Trepov was appointed Governor of St. Petersburg, and became practically dictator. He governed Russia until 17 October (30 October, N.S.), 1905.

11–17 January. Disturbances in Helsingfors, Riga, and Warsaw.

14 January. The Procurator of the Finnish Senate, Jensen, murdered at Helsingfors.

19 January. The chief of the police in Odessa wounded.

4 February. The Grand Duke Serge Alexandrovitch murdered at Moscow.

6–16 February. Disturbances in Baku.

From the 16th onwards conflicts between students and hooligans in Kursk, Kazan, Pskov, Tambov, and Moscow.

March, 1905. Movement among the railway servants, ending in April in the formation of a Universal Society of Railway Hands.

April, 1905. Agrarian disturbances (which had begun in February) in the Governments of Chernigov, Kursk, Voronezh, Orel, Tver, Kharkov, Simbirsk, Archangel, Viatka, and White Russia.

From March to May several police officers were killed in Poland. The head of the secret police was killed in Nizhni-Novgorod, a police captain was killed in Zhitomir, the Governor was wounded at Ufa, and in Baku the Governor, Prince Nakashidze, was murdered by a bomb.

5–11 June, 1905. At Lodz a crowd, instigated by the Polish social revolutionaries and the Jews of the "Bund," came into conflict with the troops. 173 killed, 200 wounded.

11–20 June. Mutiny in the Black Sea fleet.

16 June. Mutiny on board the *Potemkin*; 18 sailors deserted.

19 June. Mutiny on board the *Prut*; 1 officer and boatswain killed.

This mutiny was followed by disorders at Tiflis, got up by the revolutionaries; a railway strike, a strike in the water and kerosene works; the police attacked by bombs (23–5 June). 2 Cossacks, 2 police officers killed, 20 persons killed and wounded.

June–July, 1905. Agrarian disorders, notably in the province of Saratov. Houses of landowners burnt. The Governor of Saratov was shot at three times, and in attempting to prevent the lynching of the doctors by a band of 2000 men, P. A. Stolypin was injured and two doctors were killed.

28 June. General Count Shuvalov, the Governor of the town of Moscow, was murdered by the terrorists at Moscow.

July. Anti-Jewish riots in Zhitomir.

July. Anti-intellectual riots in Nizhni-Novgorod. Strikes at Tula, Kostroma, the Vladi-Caucasian Railway, and Revel.

20 August. Disorders at Libau, caused by the mobilization of the reserves; 122 arrests, 24 wounded, 7 killed.

22–5 August. Renewed disorders at Baku.

September, 1905. Proclamations issued in Russian in Finland by the social revolutionaries, calling upon the soldiers to mutiny, distributed among the troops.

During the whole of this month demonstrations, with red flags and revolutionary speeches, took place in different places all over Russia; bombs were thrown, stores of arms were discovered, local strikes and disturbances became more and more frequent.

This list, which is the abbreviated account of an already abbreviated list (I have only chosen the more striking events), shows at least that the revolutionary movement from December, 1904, to October, 1905, so far from abating, went on steadily increasing. During this period, it will be remembered, a large part of the Russian army was in the Far East. How did the Government

meet the situation ? On the one hand, about a third of the whole of the Russian Empire was placed under martial law, or a state of enforced protection which is a gradation of martial law. On the other hand, the Government made concessions to public opinion. In February, 1905, two contradictory manifestos were published respecting internal affairs. The defeat of Tsushima hastened matters by giving a sharp twist to the screw of public discontent. On August 6 a further manifesto was issued which contained a project of a consultative Duma. This project satisfied nobody.

On October 8 the workmen of St. Petersburg raised the question of a political strike, and in ten days the strike spread to the whole railway system of Russia ; to the factories, banks, tramways, waterworks, electric-light works, law courts, theatres—in fact, the whole country went on strike.

On October 17 (October 30, O.S.) the Emperor's manifesto was published, and Count Witte took office. The revolution did not cease, and there were further strikes of a serious nature in St. Petersburg. The workmen were under the leadership of a man called Krustaliev Nosar, who aimed at establishing a social republic. Count Witte did not at once take energetic measures against Krustaliev and the workmen, but he waited until he considered this could be done without provoking greater difficulties than those which already existed. His policy was justified by subsequent events. When he had Krustaliev arrested on November 26, 1905, and the leading committee of the workmen on December 3, everything passed off quite quietly.

Count Witte remained in office until April 20, 1906. What he succeeded in achieving can be summed up briefly, but the importance of the achievement speaks for itself. He succeeded in bringing back the chief portion of the army from Manchuria in spite of the strikes. He made a foreign loan of 843 million roubles (£84,300,000).

In other words, he furnished the executive power with the necessary weapons for fighting the active revolutionaries; he kept things going until the meeting of the first Duma, which was the safety-valve of the Liberal movement, and afforded the Liberals an excellent instrument for future action, granted that they should be capable of making use of it. Unfortunately they disappointed the expectations of the country.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT—ITS NEGATIVE RESULTS

WHEN one hears people in England discuss the revolutionary movement in Russia, one is soon aware that the general conception of the whole matter in the mind of the ordinary Englishman is something like this. The population of Russia, after centuries of oppression, managed, owing to the difficult situation in which the unsuccessful war against the Japanese had placed the Russian Government, to make itself heard and felt. The Russian autocracy was forced to make concessions; it granted a semblance of representative government, made promises of reform, and seemed even inclined to countenance the means by which projects of reform might grow to be established facts. But as soon as the panic, caused by agrarian disturbances and military discontent, had subsided, it at once took back what it had given and crushed all remonstrance and resistance by brute force; the only palpable result of the whole agitation being a series of wholesale executions and courts-martial, and a Parliament packed by supporters of the Government, and powerless to legislate, even if it wanted to. Such is the version of the case as I have generally heard it stated in England, and as I have often seen it stated in our Press.

Now, whether this version is right or wrong, is a debatable matter; but one thing is certain, it leaves out the true causes of the failure of the revolutionary movement in Russia to achieve a definite and special result; and the cause it implies, namely, that the Government took advantage of a lull in affairs to take back what it had given, would be, in the eyes of any sensible Russian, not only unsatisfactory but childish.

I used the word "sensible" on purpose; because it is easy enough to find Russians who will say anything, however extravagant and however baseless, when their political faith is concerned. But here is what a well-known Russian Liberal, S. L. Frank, says on this very subject:—

"The banal explanation of the failure of the revolution being due to the wickedness of the 'reactionaries' and the 'Bureaucracy' cannot satisfy any one who wishes to discuss the matter seriously, conscientiously, and, above all things, fruitfully. It is not only wrong as far as the facts are concerned; but it is logically false. It is not a theoretic explanation, but merely an extremely one-sided and practically harmful distortion of the facts. Of course, it is undeniable that the party which defended the older order of things did everything it could to stifle the movement of liberation, and to deprive it of its fruits. This party can be accused of egoism, of short-sighted statesmanship, of neglecting the interests of the people; but to make it responsible for the failure of the struggle which was being carried on against it, and which aimed at its destruction, is to argue either without conscience, or in a childishly absurd manner: it is almost the same as accusing the Japanese of being responsible for the failure of the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War."

The facts beyond dispute are these. At the end of the Russo-Japanese War, a movement, headed by the most prominent Liberals in Russia, was strong enough not only to demand, but to obtain a radical change in the constitution of the Russian Empire, although the movement was not backed up by force: that is to say, it had not the army behind it. In less than a year's time this same movement was powerless to exercise any influence on the Government whatsoever. The Government were able to dissolve a Duma, consisting, for the greater part, of Liberal leaders, without a finger being stirred, or a shot fired in protest. The Government were also able to change the electoral law as often as they chose, and to give it the colour they desired. In three years' time it was clear that the movement, which had started with the aim and intention of transforming the Russian autocracy into a representative democracy, whatever its other results, had failed to achieve that object. The question which arises is: "How is it that at one moment the revolutionary movement was strong enough, without force of arms, to make

the Government grant reforms of a revolutionary nature, and yet, shortly afterwards, so weak that the Government was able to do what they pleased with the reformers and reforms ? "

Something must have happened. There must be a cause for this sudden transition from success to failure on the part of the reformers. I will endeavour to trace, as briefly as possible, the main causes of the failure of the revolutionary movement.

Out of this first question there arises another, equally interesting and perhaps more important: " Had the revolutionary agitation, or the movement towards reform, although it failed to achieve its aim, no results at all ? And if it produced results, what are they ? how far are they positive or negative, permanent or transitory ? are they discernible in the Russia of to-day ? "

The answer to this last question is certainly in the affirmative; a fact which is often ignored by Russians, who are perhaps too near their own affairs to see them in perspective; they are unable to see the wood for the trees. I will attempt to deal with this question in the next chapter.

If we desire to ascertain the cause of the failure of the revolutionary movement in Russia we must look for the cause of its temporary success, and we will find the two causes are one and the same; they can be summed up in the two words which we have met with at all the critical moments of Russian history: Public Opinion.[1]

[1] The Englishman who derives his opinion from the daily press, and especially that specimen of the English politican who seems to think it necessary to carry on the time-honoured parliamentary tradition of being virtuous at some one else's expense, and to qualify for the business of governing England by evincing a passionate concern, based on ignorance, in the affairs of other countries, is unaware that such a thing as public opinion exists or ever has existed in Russia. There are some who would go so far as to deny it. I do not think this observation is either unfair or extravagant, in view of the fact that a committee actually existed in the House of Commons not long ago with the object of helping the Russian people in their "struggle for freedom," who were ingenuous enough to think that they could aid that cause by issuing misleading, and sometimes false, statements about Russia generally, derived from the flotsam and jetsam of the Russian refugees, which were repeated and exaggerated in the Press.

Another group of Englishmen (not only politicians), by their timely interference in 1910, succeeded in hampering the Russian Liberals, who were battling with the Finnish question, and in dealing a blow to the cause of Finland; imagining, so warm were their hearts, and so feather-light were their reasoning powers, that the Liberals in the Russian Government would be encouraged, and the Conservatives in the Russian Government, so far from resenting any interference in their affairs, would be frightened by the published protest of a group of English professors and politicians, who daily showed their incapacity to deal with domestic questions of a similar nature—such as the Irish question—at their very door and under their very noses.

In spite, however, of its being a generally prevalent opinion in the English Press, and especially among politicians, that Russia consists of a herd of mute millions, cowering at the heels of a small and unscrupulous body of brutal satraps, this opinion is not shared by Russian thinkers and writers, however radical.

In discussing this question I shall dwell solely on the opinion of those Russian thinkers and writers who are on the side of the Progressive movement; who, while it was going on, worked in it and for it. In the first place, their analysis of its failure must necessarily be more interesting than that of men who did all they could to make it fail; and in the second place, because by so doing I will shield myself from the charge of holding any kind of brief in favour of reaction.

Those Russian writers and thinkers who took part in the movement of reform, which Russians call the " Movement of Liberation," think that public opinion was at the root of the matter. They hold that the movement of liberation succeeded for a time, because for a time public opinion was on its side, and failed subsequently because public opinion ceased to be on its side. It failed, that is to say, to maintain the support of public opinion. Between its leaders and its rank and file, and the mass of the population, the peasants, as well as the man in the street, there appeared not only an estrangement but a divorce —a wide gulf—and as soon as this occurred, the Government was able to step in and to do what it pleased. If it could not count on enthusiastic support it could at least count on universal apathy; it had no resistance to fear.

The next question is: How did this come about and what was the nature of this public opinion?

I should like here to repeat and to sum up a matter which I have already several times noted during the course of this book, namely, the importance of the action of public opinion throughout Russian history. It must be clear to any thinking man that ever since Russia has existed the men who have governed the country must have relied on some kind of public opinion, otherwise they could not have gone on governing. We have seen how Ivan the Terrible relied on the support of the clergy and the people, to cut off the heads and to destroy the power of the nobility. We have seen how Peter the Great

created and made democratic an aristocratic State service; how Catherine II relied on the nobility, extended its powers, and laid the foundation of local administration. Catherine II owed the throne to public opinion, and maintained herself there by means of it. We have seen how Alexander I and Nicholas I failed to deal with the question of emancipation, because of the unreadiness of public opinion, and how Alexander II brought about that reform by means of it; how public opinion—which during his reign was aspiring towards reform—was set back and panic-stricken by his murder, and accepted the reaction which necessarily followed during the reign of Alexander III.

Until 1904, any expression of public opinion was local and took the shape of student disturbances. To make itself heard it had to use dynamite. In other words, it represented the minority. But at the end of 1904, when the nature of the Japanese war became plain, and the Russian armies were unsuccessful in the field, public opinion in Russia began to grow more and more discontented with the powers who were responsible for beginning this war.

In 1905 the discontent grew into anger; the prominent Liberals who were concerned in the local government, the County Councils, gathered together in a group, and formulated demands for a radical change in the Constitution, and by so doing they gave expression to an idea which had been growing ever since the 'sixties. Public opinion was entirely on their side. All classes of society were discontented: the intellectuals, business men, manufacturers, tradesmen, the peasants and the proletariat, and the army. The Government was alarmed, and at a loss what to do. A consultative legislative assembly was promised; but this satisfied nobody. Peace was made with Japan; but the agitation continued. Finally there was a universal strike all over Russia. But this remarkable manifestation did not, as is generally thought, actually force the hands of the Government, although it doubtless had a great moral effect. A strike of this kind could not possibly, by its nature and extent, last more than five or six days, and it had already practically collapsed before the Government had decided on an important step, which was none other than to change the purely autocratic constitution of Russia; to introduce a new principle into the government of the country, and to institute a legislative

chamber constructed on representative lines. When this news was published in Russia, on October 30, 1905, it was more or less taken for granted by the mass of educated people that the Emperor had granted a constitution. The impression was inaccurate, because the Emperor had spoken no word about a constitution or of swearing an oath to it; nor did he allude to himself in any other manner than as Autocrat *Samoderzhets* of the Russians. Hence, what the reformers had obtained was not in reality a constitution, but a charter laying down as a principle that henceforward no new laws should be made without the Russian people having a share in their making—the gift of an Autocrat, who had the right and power to modify it, or to take it back, should he see fit. But only a very few clear-sighted people thought of the manifesto in this light. The mass of the population could have been divided into three categories, all of which regarded the manifesto as a "Constitution": those who acclaimed the document with hope; those who accepted it with scepticism; and those who looked upon it with hatred and disgust, as being the result of the machinations of foreigners, Jews, and traitors. This last category, though not numerically important, had the support of a dangerous element in the population, namely, the rabble, in all the towns. They could also count on kindling racial passions, such as anti-Semitism, and on stirring up the people against the foreign nationalities (Poles, Finns), which are a part of the Russian Empire. They also had the enormous advantage of sheltering themselves under the banner of loyalty and patriotism—a kind of patriotism which answered to Dr. Johnson's definition of that quality, in that it was the last refuge of a multitude of scoundrels.

In short, the manifesto of October was received by some with hope, by others with doubt, and by others again with rage, but by no one with positive enthusiasm. It seemed to promise everything; and yet the most sanguine of the Liberal leaders felt that their work, so far from being done, had, in reality, only just begun. They were, at the same time, inspired with the hope (which has been so far justified by subsequent events) that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Government to go back entirely on its word, and take back the principle that the opinion of the people should, through its representatives, have a share in the government of the country.

In October, 1905, whatever disappointment the nature and the terms of the Emperor's manifesto may have caused, the reformers and the Progressive leaders felt, nevertheless, that the game was in their hands; that, although the struggle might prove arduous, the victory would ultimately be theirs. The mass of the educated public thought likewise. Then came a series of disillusioning events.

The peasants, hearing it proclaimed everywhere that an era of liberty had begun, interpreted this to mean that the time had come when justice was at last to be done them, and the land would be theirs. It must be borne in mind that the peasants considered that the land had been given to them by the Emperor when serfdom was abolished in the 'sixties, but they believed they had been cheated out of it by the class which stood like a barrier between them and the Emperor. So they set about laying hands on the land, burning proprietors' houses and cattle, and creating everywhere what are called "agrarian disturbances."

The leaders of the Progressive movement were, as I have said, men of the landowner class, who had taken part for years in the local administration of the country. The rank and file of the Progressive army was recruited from the whole of the intellectual middle-class, which is in Russia called the *Intelligenzia*, and consists of the professional classes, the intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, professors, schoolmasters, writers, and, finally, the students.

As soon as it became a question not merely of indefinite agitation, but of practical political organization, the leaders split up into two main groups, because they disagreed on various matters, such as the questions of Polish autonomy and of the Land. The two main groups consisted of a monarchical and constitutional party, which we should scarcely call Whigs, who called themselves *Octobrists*, after the manifesto of October 30; and a more advanced Liberal party who called themselves "Constitutional Democrats," whose programme was radical, and included universal suffrage and the wholesale expropriation of all landed property. The rank and file of the Intelligenzia likewise split into groups of various shades of political order (ranging from the constitutional conservatism of the Octobrists, on the Right, to the terrorism of the extreme

revolutionaries on the Left). But, roughly speaking, they were divided into two camps: the more conservative-minded of them formed the Constitutional Democrats, who were subsequently nicknamed "Kadets" (K. D.'s—the first two letters of Constitutional Democrats, constitutional being spelt with a "K" in Russian), and the more Radical-minded called themselves "Social Democrats" and "Social Revolutionaries." The artisan class joined these two latter groups to a man.

At the beginning of November, 1905, the whole of political Russia could have been partitioned off into three categories: an extreme Right, consisting of the partisans of reaction and of unlimited autocracy; a Centre, consisting of the Octobrists and the Constitutional Democrats. A Left, divided equally between a Social Democratic party and a Social Revolutionary party. This last-mentioned party was not disinclined to resort to the most violent means and measures, such as terrorism and armed risings. The peasantry stood aloof, isolated in their own interests, and trusting nobody.

The number of splits which occurred in the Liberal camp may have caused a certain amount of disappointment; but, on the whole, they were thought to be natural and inevitable. But there were truer sources of disillusion: an abortive post strike, headed by the revolutionary proletariat in St. Petersburg, a series of anti-Jewish and anti-intellectual riots which occurred in the autumn all over the country (said to be got up by the Government, but in most cases the natural result of existing circumstances); an armed rising in Moscow, headed by some of the intellectual revolutionaries but carried out mostly by schoolboys and schoolgirls, which the proletariat took part in, and which cost loss of much life and property, and much fruitless bloodshed; the boycotting of the elections by the Left parties, who refused to have anything to do with them, and a sharp division of opinion, fraught with extreme party bitterness, between the two main divisions of the Centre, the Octobrists and the Constitutional Democrats. But, in spite of this, the outlook was far from hopeless. The Progressive Liberals were sanguine, for the Constitutional Democrats and the Octobrists between them comprised nearly all that was intellectually prominent in Russia, and the only men of the non-official class who had had any experience of practical administration. They had amongst them

eloquent spokesmen and lawyers of proved capacity, and brilliant, intellectual, and dialectical gifts.

They had, moreover, behind them the public opinion of the man in the street, the business man, and the man who wanted the country to settle down. The thinking part of the country, with the exception of the extreme Conservatives, thought that salvation lay with them. At the elections, the Constitutional Democrats were returned almost everywhere by enormous majorities; and a Duma was elected, in which they not only had a large majority, but a majority consisting of the flower of intellectual Russia. The game seemed to be in their hands. Why, therefore, was it that they failed? How did they manage to lose the confidence of that public opinion which had enabled them to obtain their predominant position, and why was it, when the Government struck at them, that they found support neither in the proletariat, the peasantry, the army, nor the man in the street?

Russians have lately been discussing this question at length. In 1910 a book called *Landmarks* appeared, consisting of a series of articles written by different authors, but all of them belonging to the Progressive *Intelligenzia*, which dealt exhaustively with this very question. They found the answer in the peculiar psychology of the Russian *Intelligenzia;* and I will endeavour to state as briefly as possible some of the conclusions at which they arrived. The publication of this book caused a sensation in Russia. It came in for a great share of abuse, for although few could challenge the fundamental truth of its statements, there were some who said that such things, even if true, were better left unsaid, because the saying of them would do harm to the Liberal cause. But the opinion of most sensible men was that the book was not only true, but salutary; its criticism not only well founded, but as timely as a tonic to an anæmic patient and as wholesome as quinine to a fever-stricken man.

In an article on this book, *Landmarks*, one of the collaborators, S. N. Bulgakov, writes as follows:—

"The Movement of Liberation did not bring about the results which it should have produced; and it is not only because it was too weak to fight the dark forces of the past, that it failed to bring about reconciliation, renovation, a strengthen-

ing of the bonds of the State (although it left an offshoot for the future in the shape of the Duma), and the improvement of agricultural conditions amongst the peasants. No, it failed to conquer, because it was not strong enough in itself to grapple with the task in question: it suffered from the weakness of internal contradiction. The Russian revolution developed an enormous destructive force; it succeeded in bringing about a great earthquake; but its constructive power was far weaker than its destructive power. The bitter admission of this fact seems to many the sum total of what we have gone through. Should we pass this admission by in silence, or is it not better to put to ourselves the question: Why is this so?"

The various writers who have contributed to *Landmarks* all put to themselves this same question in various ways, and they all come to the same conclusion: namely, that the reason why the Russian Movement of Liberation was found wanting, when it was tried, lay in the psychology, the peculiar training, habits, manners, customs, and *Weltanchauung* of the Russian Intelligenzia during the last forty years. Let us consider a few of its characteristics. Firstly, during the last forty years the whole ideal of this intellectually plastic and highly over-educated product has been the *worship of the people*, which became with them a species of idolatry. This, as I have already said, began with the nihilists in the 'seventies. Only the nihilists did carry on propaganda at immense personal sacrifice, whereas their successors only talked about doing so. Nevertheless, the watchword during all this period was to serve the people, to do everything for the people; but, as P. B. Struve (a Socialist and a member of the second Russian Duma and one of the most energetic workers in the Movement of Liberation) points out in his contribution to *Landmarks*:—

"The doctrine of the *Intelligenzia* to serve the people at all costs did not entail the fulfilment of any obligations towards the people, and did not set before the people any educational problem. As the 'people' consists of men who are actuated by their interests and their instincts, the teaching of the 'Intelligenzia' when it reached them did not bring forth anything like an ideal fruit. The propagation of this so-called popular doctrine, let alone that of Karl Marx's theories, in reality led simply to dislocation and to demoralization."

The main point, in fact, of what these various authors say on the subject is that the *Intelligenzia*, in making an idol of the "people," remained utterly alien and divorced from the people; partly because they were themselves imbued with an aristocratic, not to say a despotic, spirit, and partly because, owing to the ideas they took for granted, the blinkers of accepted theories which they wore, they were unable to understand the people; they totally and fundamentally misconceived the nature of the desires, the hopes and fears, beliefs and disbeliefs, and the state of mind of the being whom they had raised into an idol. Consequently their influence, so far as they had any, was only, and could only be, destructive and demoralizing.

This continuous and worse than fruitless idolatry reacted on themselves, and severed them from all useful, practical, and profitable ideals and action.

Here is the picture M. O. Herchenson gives of the manners and customs of the *Intelligenzia* during the last fifty years:—

"A small group of revolutionaries went from house to house and knocked at every door, crying, 'Come into the street; it is shameful to stay at home!' And the field of their activity and their ideas, maimed, blind, and halt as they were, became the 'market-place'—not one of them remained at home. For half a century they disported themselves in the market-place, shouting and abusing each other. Their homes were nests of dirt, need, and disorder, but the master of the house had no time to see to that. He was busy with the people, he was saving the people; that was easier and far more amusing than the drudgery of the household.

"Nobody lived; all were engaged, or pretended to be engaged, in 'public' work. They did not even live selfishly, nor enjoy life and taste its pleasures, save in snatches; they gulped down whole pieces and swallowed them, almost without biting them, ashamed, and at the same time rapaciously greedy, like a stray dog. It was a strange kind of asceticism: not a renunciation of the individual sensual life, but a renunciation of all control over it. Their sensual life went on by itself, somehow or other, sullenly and by fits and starts. Then suddenly a fit of conscience would overtake them; a brutal fanaticism would be kindled at one point; a man would load a friend with abuse because he had drunk a bottle of champagne, a society would be formed with some kind of ascetic purpose. In general, the whole manner of life of the 'Intelligenzia' was terrible; a long abomina-

tion of desolation, without any kind or sort of discipline, without the slightest consecutiveness, even on the surface. The day passes in doing nobody knows what, to-day in one manner, and to-morrow, as the result of a sudden inspiration, entirely contrariwise; everyone lives his life in idleness, slovenliness, and a measureless disorder; chaos and squalor reign in his matrimonial and sexual relations; a naive absence of conscientiousness distinguishes his work; in public affairs he shows an irrepressible inclination towards despotism, and an utter absence of consideration towards his fellow-creatures; and his attitude towards the authorities of the State is marked at times by a proud defiance, and at others (individually and not collectively) by compliance."

This picture is in no way exaggerated. I have been able to check the truth of it myself by personal experience; but if any of my readers are inclined to think that the colours have been heightened, he has only to read any of the Russian literature portraying the life of this class of people during the last fifty years in order to find a confirmation of the picture. He has only to dip into the translations of Chekov's stories, and he will see photographs of life of the kind analysed in this passage.

This is how Chekov puts the matter himself, speaking through the mouth of one of the characters of his plays, a student :—

"In Russia there are not many people who do any work at present. The great majority of that *Intelligenzia* which I know is in search of nothing, accomplishes nothing, and is not yet capable of work. They call themselves the *Intelligenzia;* they 'tutoyer' the servants, treat the peasants as if they were animals, they learn badly, they read nothing serious, they do absolutely nothing: they only *talk* about science; they understand little about art; they are all serious; they all of them wear a severe expression; they all of them talk only of important things; they talk philosophy: and in the meantime the overwhelming majority among them, ninety-nine out of a hundred, live like savages, abusing each other so that they come to blows almost immediately; they eat disgusting food, sleep in dirt and bad air, there are bugs everywhere, bad smells, damp, moral squalor. . . ."

While these people were exerting their energies in the market-place, and exhausting themselves in a barren idolatry of the people, they were busily assimilating every kind of alien and foreign philosophy.

Foreign systems of philosophy were taken up one after another, each for a time becoming the rage and the fashion. Schellingism, Hegelianism, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Comte, Marx, Neo-Kantism, Max, anarchism—all had their day. And the more the Intelligenzia deviated from reality, truth, and life, the more eagerly they stuffed themselves with abstract theory and alien philosophy. Every now and then a writer of genius appeared and told them they were on the wrong tack—Chadaev, Dostoievski, Tolstoi, Soloviev, Tiutev and Fet did so again and again; but they paid no heed.

"They called us," writes Herchenson, "to fresh paths; they bade us come out of our spiritual prison into the freedom of the wide world . . . but none heeded the call."

They went further, and applied a party criterion to the unshackled creations of these men of genius, and accused Dostoievski of being a reactionary, Chekov of callousness, and Fet (the poet) of cynicism.

But most important of all, when the clash came between the *Intelligenzia* and the peasants, who were the substance on which they were trying to work, was their attitude towards religion. "There is no educated middle-class, no *Intelligenzia*," writes S. N. Bulgakov in *Landmarks*, "more atheistic than the Russian. Atheism is the universal creed, in which those who enter the church of the Schoolboy-*Intelligenzia* are baptized, and not only those who come from the educated classes, but also those who come from the people." Atheism is with them a tradition, a thing which is taken for granted, and admits of no discussion; it is the indispensable sign and hall-mark of good breeding. It is an atheism based on uncritical, unprovable, and dogmatically false affirmations, to the effect that science is capable of finally deciding on all religious questions and has settled them once and for all in a negative sense.

"This belief," writes Bulgakov, "is shared by the learned and the unlearned, the old and the young. It takes root in the age of adolescence. . . . It is generally easy and natural that youth should catch the denial of religion, which it exchanges for a belief in science and progress. But the people of *Intelligenzia*, once they have started from this standpoint, retain this creed, in the majority of cases, for the rest of their lives, because they consider that these questions have been sufficiently

elucidated and finally settled, and they are hypnotized by the unanimity in such a view expressed by those who surround them."

Further on he writes as follows :—

"The most striking thing about Russian Atheism is its dogmatic spirit, or rather the religious carelessness with which it is accepted. . . . The ignorance of our *Intelligenzia* with regard to religious matters is striking. . . . Our *Intelligenzia*, as far as religion is concerned, has simply never grown out of the age of adolescence, it has not yet once seriously thought of religion. It has never consciously formed a definite religious opinion ; it has never yet harboured a religious thought ; and it remains, therefore, strictly speaking, not above religion, as it supposes, but below it. The best proof of all this is the historic origin of Russian Atheism. It was imported by us from the West ; we received it as the last word of Western civilization, at first in the form of Voltairism and the materialism of the French Encyclopédists ; then in the form of Atheistic Socialism, and later in the form of the Positivism of the 'sixties, and in our time in that of economic materialism."

We have before us, therefore, the picture of a highly receptive, over-educated middle-class, which is saturated with every kind of Western philosophic theory, which has no self-control, no discipline, and no sense of individual duty ; despotic in character, and dogmatic in the way it takes for granted an imported Atheism, stuffed full of theory, divorced from all kind of reality, extravagant in its sporadic excesses and its sporadic asceticism ; without rudder and without aim, giving up all those duties which lie near at hand to it ; neglecting altogether the state of life into which it has been called, in order to devote itself to an idol it has created, and which it has called the People. What was the result ? How could this group of morally maimed and crippled intellectuals act on the vast masses of the Russian peasantry ? How did the Russian peasantry take the propaganda, and what did they think of the preachers ?

The answer is given clearly by Herchenson in his essay.

"To say that the people," he writes, "do not understand us and hate us is not to say the whole truth. Perhaps they do not understand us because we are more cultured than they are. Perhaps they hate us because we do not work with our hands,

and live in ease. No. The point is this: they hate us because they fail to recognize that we are men. We are in their eyes monsters in human shape, men without God in their soul: and they are right."

In another place, pointing out the difference between the relations of the lower and educated classes in Russia and in Western Europe, he says :—

"Between us and our people there is a different kind of division. We are in the eyes of the people not robbers, like his brother the village *kulak* (the close-fisted rich peasant), we are not even simply aliens, like the Turks or the French; he sees our human and our Russian exterior, but he does not feel the presence of a human soul in us; and for this reason he hates us passionately, and probably with an unconscious, mystical hatred; and he hates us all the more because we are his own people. *As we are at present* it is not only impossible for us to dream of union and communion with the people, but we should fear it more than all the executions of the higher Powers, and give thanks to our higher Powers, which with their bayonets and their prisons still ward from us the fury of the people."

But the *Intelligenzia* at the beginning of the revolution had no such ideas. They were convinced that the difference between them and the people were only differences of degree; of culture, education, and circumstance; and that were it not for official obstacles they would be at one with each other. That there was any difference of *kind* between their soul and the soul of the people never occurred to them; they forgot altogether that the people had a soul. This had, however, more than once been pointed out to them by writers of genius: Gogol had mentioned the fact, so had Tolstoi. Dostoievski had said it loud and often.

The Russian people—the peasantry, I mean—is a practical people. They are realists. They cleave to fact. They are rooted in reality. The things which they desire are exclusively practical things—practical, useful, and needful for their inner as much as for their outer lives. That is to say, they thirst for practical technical knowledge, such as reading and writing, and for a higher metaphysical knowledge; a working spiritual hypothesis, a system which shall explain to them the meaning of life and give them the strength to live it. The great mass of

them have found their working hypothesis in the Christian religion. The intellectuals neglected this altogether. They forgot, or rather they never thought, as Herchenson points out, that the people, if it was a child in knowledge, was an old man in experience.

"And old in grief and very wise in tears."

They neglected the fact that the peasants had a definite outlook of their own, founded on a first-hand and bitterly real struggle with existence. But the *Intelligenzia*, with their Western watchwords, their ready-made atheism, their second-hand Socialism, their futile fads, their worn-out catchwords, and their dogmatic materialism, thought that by scattering pamphlets broadcast on the most heterogeneous subjects—on Woman's Suffrage, the Magna Charta, the French Revolution, a Defence of Suicide, Philosophic Anarchy, Malthusianism, State Expropriation, Voltaire on Christianity, George on the Land Question, Mr. X. on the Non-existence of Property, Professor Y. on the Non-existence of the Soul, and Professor Z. on the Non-existence of God—that the people would flock to their banner, embrace them as brothers, and enthrone them in the place of those members of the middle-class by whom they had hitherto been governed, namely, the officials.

What did happen was this. Fifty years of "People worship," in which the *Intelligenzia* had been engaged, had merely created an unbridgeable gulf, not merely between them and the people, but between them and any possible basis of understanding with the people. But the energetic and widespread propaganda of the *Intelligenzia*, at a time of national crisis, when railways were being run by irresponsible and mutinous soldiers, when the public servants were closing the post offices and were engaged in private conversation throughout the length and breadth of Russia, when all the symbols, signs, and manifestations of authority seemed to have been shattered, and only one cry was heard, namely, "The Tsar has given you freedom! Do as you please!" could not fail to have a definite effect. It did. The people raised their heads and interpreted the message in their own way. Socialism they interpreted to mean the property of other people; materialism the right to rob and kill whom you pleased, to drink as much as you liked, and to be emancipated, once and for all, from all laws—human, moral, or divine.

The result was twofold :

(1) When the Duma was dissolved, and the Constitutional Democrats, counting on a popular rising, resolved to defy the Government, not one finger was lifted in their support.

(2) A wave of demoralization and destruction passed throughout the length and breadth of Russia.

It must be remembered that when the Government dissolved the first Duma, it was itself in a state of panic. The measure was a leap in the dark. It was taken against the advice of many of the most Conservative officials (among others, General Trepov); mutinies were occurring in regiments, disorders were rife all over the country, and many people thought that the dissolution of the Duma would be a signal for a final catastrophe and conflagration.

The Government was able to dissolve the first Duma for two reasons :

Firstly, because the Duma itself was daily splitting up into a greater number of divergent groups. The leading party in the Duma, the Kadets, revealed a sad lack of political experience, and both strategically and tactically they made a series of mistakes ; so that some of the more capable men among them left the party and formed groups of their own. The Duma was torn by internal dissension, and no great leader came to the front to rally its undisciplined elements, which daily fell wider and wider apart, to one flag and to one definite policy.

Secondly, owing to the fundamental misunderstanding between the *Intelligenzia* and the people, there was in reality no link, no bond, between the people and its representatives.

But the matter did not stop there. As soon as the Duma was dissolved, the parties of the Extreme Left replied to the step the Government had taken by organizing a policy of wholesale terrorism on a large scale. They shot policemen, blew up governors, and every day a long list of political murders and attempts at murder was published in the newspapers.

This terrorist movement made a profound impression on the people. The ordinary pickpocket, the professional vagabond, the practising thief, the casual assassin, the highway robber, the incendiary, and the marauder, all looked on with interest and adopted the methods which the revolutionaries had brought into fashion. The thief terrorized banks with

dynamite bombs, and robbed the safe instead of robbing the till. The common assassin murdered whole families, and then blew up their houses in order to steal a few roubles, trusting—and often rightly—that the matter would be put down to a political "attempt."

A new species of highwayman came into being, who held up trains and robbed the passengers and the mails. A new species of robbery came into being called "Expropriation,"[1] and which was nothing else but robbery under arms. You went up to a man and demanded his money, and if he refused to give it, you shot him dead. But it is the name of the thing which is so profoundly suggestive, interesting, and illuminating.

The fact that simple assault accompanied by robbery, and sometimes by murder, was treated as if it were the same thing as the expropriation of a railway by the State, shows that the propaganda of the intellectuals had sunk into the rabble, reached the criminal classes, and been interpreted by them in their own fashion. A wave of hooliganism passed over the whole of Russia. From the social revolutionaries at the top of the ladder, who did not shrink from throwing bombs into a crowd of innocent women and children, in order to kill one unpopular police officer, to the vagabond and the tramp, who murdered passers-by for the sake of a few pence, an unlimited arbitrary lawlessness reigned. Nobody felt safe; neither the peasant, the merchant, the banker, nor the policeman, and least of all the man in the street. And this was the death-blow of the revolution; because, fatally and inevitably, a reaction came about in public opinion. The Government met this wave of anarchy by proclaiming martial law, and by instituting a series of drum-head courts martial. The anarchy did not seem to diminish, and for a time it seemed as if Russia had been caught in a vicious circle of anarchical crime and arbitrary repression. A section of public opinion cried out against the number and the indiscriminate character of the executions.

But public opinion was no longer unanimous, because it must be remembered that the number of executions was to the number of assassinations in the proportion of one to three. The matter was discussed with powerful eloquence during the session of the second Duma in the winter of 1907. But when

[1] In Russian "Expropriatsia."

the leaders of the Constitutional Democrats, who were voicing with fire and eloquence their section of public opinion, were asked in their turn to express their disapproval of the terrorist acts of the revolutionaries, they evaded the question. They refused to repudiate terrorism definitely and clearly and once for all. They refused to sever themselves from all suspicion of complicity and sympathy with revolutionary means and methods, although by so doing they in no way won the support of the revolutionary parties, who hated them even more than they did the Government. Their attitude, it cannot be denied, was one of moral timidity, and it was shared by the whole of the *Intelligenzia*. Here, again, this class proved its divorce from reality, and made the abyss, not only between themselves and the people, but between themselves and the man in the street, wider than it was before. Here, again, the Kadets proved their fatal lack of political *flair*.

Thus it came about that public opinion, which had at the outset supported the intellectuals, as represented by the Constitutional Democrats, turned definitely against them, and on all sides one began to hear abuse of the Kadets, who now lost credit with all classes of society. So that now, at the present day,[1] no words are bad enough for them, and the *Novoe Vremya* almost daily alludes to them as the Jewish-Polish party. There is a certain amount of intellectual snobbishness in this. To be fair, one should say that though the Kadets are themselves to blame, they nevertheless almost succeeded in bluffing the Government in the summer of 1906. People forget that a Kadet Ministry was within an ace of being formed. They forget how many people at that time thought that they would win the game in spite of all. The lessons of the past led so many of us to think that because people talk nonsense and behave foolishly, that is no reason why they may not succeed. The French Kadets in the French Revolution talked nonsense, but they succeeded. The difference between them is this: that in France the men with backbone—Mirabeau, Danton, Carnot—appeared on the side of the revolution, in Russia the man with a backbone appeared on the side of the Government. This is what nobody foresaw—the advent of P. Stolypin. Before he became Prime Minister, the conduct and policy of the Government during the session of

[1] 1910.

the first Duma was one of vacillation and latent opposition. And here, again, is a fact which is now never mentioned, but which should be mentioned in fairness to the first Duma and to the Liberals. When the first Duma met, the attitude of the Government from the very first was one not of co-operation but of hostility. Instead of meeting the Duma half-way, it treated it like an enemy *from the first.* The Duma then took the offensive, challenged the Government, and said, " We are here by the will of the people; we have got a population of a hundred millions behind us, and here we stay until we have got a real Constitution! " Then the Government became thoughtful, as there were mutinies and serious signs of disorder all over the country. The bluff was almost successful, but nothing fails like failure. The man with backbone appeared on the other side—P. A. Stolypin. P. A. Stolypin was not afraid. He was ready to take the full responsibility of dissolving the Duma and assuming the reins of government. It was an act at that moment of supreme courage, and it was successful. The Duma was dissolved and there was no revolution. Even then the Kadets threw away their hand, because it had been decided to charge the President of the Duma, Muromtsev, to form a Cabinet. But he had gone, with the other Kadets, to Wiburg! He was nowhere to be found!

P. A. Stolypin was made Prime Minister, and his policy in advising the dissolution was justified by events. He showed what a man can do merely by the possession of backbone, an asset which not one of the Liberals possessed.

Then followed the period of anarchy in the country, and a guerilla warfare carried out by means of terrorism, dynamite, and automatic pistols against the Government by the revolutionaries; the dissolution of the second Duma, the changing of the electoral law, the creation of a third and more Conservative Duma; and the end of the revolution which fizzled out, and the triumph of reaction.

But why did the revolution fail, and why did reaction triumph? Certainly not simply because the Government was reactionary.

The revolution failed because it had lost the support of public opinion. It lost the support of public opinion on account of the disease from which its leaders and its rank and file all suffered, namely, a want of backbone and stamina, of moral discipline and moral courage. They could not create order

because they would not, when it came to the point, repudiate disorder. They could not set Russia free because they could not set themselves free from their own despotic and arbitrary political philosophy, which is the negation of freedom.

Reaction triumphed, because, when the whole country was submerged by anarchy and a prey to terrorism, the intellectual class, who were at the head of the Liberation Movement, never spoke out and condemned the anarchy which was prevailing, and the crimes which were being committed in the name of Liberty; whereupon the man in the street, feeling that neither himself nor his property was safe, and seeing that this state of things, so far from being condemned, was actually condoned by the intellectuals and looked upon as a good spoke in the Government's wheel, withdrew his support from this class.

The revolutionaries were fighting in the name of Justice and Freedom, but they never recognized unconditional and universal justice for everybody; their justice was confined to one class, their morality was *party* morality. Their watchword was "the inviolable rights of the individual!" and with this watchword on their lips, they utterly disregarded the rights of all those classes of people whom they happened to dislike, such as governors, ministers, policemen, and landowners.

The principles which they preached were those of the Rights of Man; the principles which they practised were of the elementary, barbarous kind, which Prince Troubetzkoi summed up as follows, "If I steal cows, that is right, but if my cows are stolen that is wrong." And so, the same author points out, they began by stealing the cows of the landowners, but they ended by stealing the cows of well-to-do peasants. Consequently their unpopularity increased in ever-widening circles, until universal public opinion not only revolted against them, but finally deserted them.

To sum up what has gone before. The Russian revolutionary movement failed, not on account of any blow from without; nor because a man of genius arose to combat it; but because no man with a backbone came forward to support it, and because one man, with a backbone, P. A. Stolypin, had the courage to oppose it, tooth and nail. That was all that was needed.

The revolution did not fail to achieve the object it set out to accomplish because of any blow from without; it failed because

it fell to pieces within; and the reason of this inward collapse was the nature and the conduct of its leaders, and of its rank and file, who were unable to win the support of the masses, and fatally destined, first to estrange, and finally to disgust public opinion; although this same public opinion, driven by the unpopularity of the Government, had once received them with open arms, and had looked forward to their future activity with enthusiasm and hope.

CHAPTER XXV

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT AND ITS POSITIVE RESULTS

IN the book which I have discussed in the preceding chapter, *Landmarks*, the authors point to the character, the views, and the life led by the *Intelligenzia* as being the cause of the failure of the Russian revolutionary movement. I think the authors of this book hit the nail upon the head. Moreover, their judgment is especially valuable in that it constitutes the first example of reasoned self-criticism proceeding from this quarter. That is to say, the authors of the book themselves belong to the clan whose weak points and mistakes they illuminate. Mr. H. G. Wells, throwing a searchlight on the weakness of the Fabians, affords us an English parallel to the case in question.

The cardinal defects of the Russian *Intelligenzia* are its despotic spirit, its disregard for the rights and feelings of others, its arrogance. The *Intelligenzia* is overwhelmingly proud of its so-called "culture," which, although in many respects admirable, often consists of a superficial knowledge of foreign philosophy and a complete absence of moral culture. Thus it is that the *Intelligenzia* is often intellectually over-cultivated, and morally under-developed.

If, on the other hand, it be urged that the case made out by the authors of *Landmarks* does not contain the whole truth with regard to the *Intelligenzia*; that it leaves out their qualities, their positive merits—which it does, since it takes them for granted—such a criticism is beyond the question at issue, the question being not "Is the Government responsible or not, for the deplorable frame of mind of the *Intelligenzia*?", nor is it "What is the total value of the *Intelligenzia* as a class?"

—but "Why did they fail to carry a revolution which they had initiated, to its logical close?"

The authors of *Landmarks*, in answer to this question, point to false ideals and mistaken methods. The *Intelligenzia* may have had other qualities of singular merit: the Government in the past may be blamed to any extent for their conduct towards the *Intelligenzia*, and may be held responsible for their frame of mind. But all this is beside the mark, if we are discussing the part which the *Intelligenzia* played in the revolutionary movement. The vital point here is that they failed to carry the people with them, they failed to bluff the Government. Against this, it is often urged that although the peculiar frame of mind of the *Intelligenzia* isolated them from reality; the Government in the past was directly responsible for the growth of that frame of mind.

The *Intelligenzia*, it may be as well to remind the reader, properly speaking, is composed of everybody who can read and write in Russia. An *Intelligent* is every man who tucks in his shirt, which is equivalent in England to wearing a collar; but the term is generally used to designate those members of the middle-class who belong to the liberal professions. In its largest sense the *Intelligenzia* signifies the whole middle-class, from which nine-tenths of the officials and the public servants are drawn; but when Russians speak of the *Intelligenzia* they generally mean the middle-class, *exclusive of officials*. It contains men of science who have done remarkable work in various branches; doctors whose life in the country is a life of hardship and self-sacrifice, which it would be difficult to over-praise; all the university professors and historians—and Russia has been fruitful in first-rate historians—schoolmasters, engineers, musicians, artists, journalists, actors, authors, and literary men. All these people were for years, to a certain extent, the prey of the irresponsibility of officialdom, of the shifting currents and the fleeting whims which were reflected in the doings of minor officials, from the changing moods of those in higher quarters. It is pointed out in their defence that they were with difficulty able to obtain foreign books (Matthew Arnold's *Essays and Criticisms* was on the Index as late as 1904). When they taught in schools many of the facts of history were tabooed to them. At the slightest suspicion of not being what the Russian Govern-

ment used to call "well-intentioned," that is to say, loyal, they could be placed under police surveillance, and if suspected of political agitation, they could be arrested, imprisoned, and deported without trial. Small wonder, it is argued, that they grew embittered and arrogant. There is indeed nothing to wonder at in this. What we do wonder at is that when the day came, as it did, after the outbreak of the war, when they were able to express their bitterness, and to give their arrogance free play, their anger was so feeble, their arrogance so limp.

It must be borne in mind that those who say that false standards were forced upon the *Intelligenzia*, by persecution, and who cry out, for instance, at their being deprived of Matthew Arnold, are the same people who most loudly proclaim that the Russian *Intelligenzia* is superior in culture to the educated bourgeoisie of other nations. In one sense it is true. The average man and woman of the Russian middle-class receives an incomparably better education than the average English man or English woman of the same class. But, as I have already tried to point out, intellectual culture is too often with them a superficial thing—which they regard as the indispensable hall-mark of decency—like clothes or atheism, and which sometimes leaves them morally uncivilized. The average Russian boy has generally a fair knowledge of European history, and an educated Russian of the middle-class is often familiar with the works of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Ruskin, Buckle, Carlyle, and John Morley. But what is the use of all this culture if it bears no fruit in practical life? Let us admit all the merits of the *Intelligenzia* to the full: let us admit to the full all the disadvantages under which they had to labour for many years; let us give the maximum of blame to the Government. Even if we do this, we cannot get over the plain fact that in 1905 they had their chance and their opportunity to get rid of the tyranny of the past and to head the reform of the future. They made the worst of the opportunity; they proved themselves inadequate; they failed. They cannot, at least, blame the Government for their failure.

There is another plain fact which one cannot get over: the *Intelligenzia* have not so far succeeded in producing a great man. The greatest Russian writers belong either to the nobility or to the people. Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Tolstoi, Turgeniev,

Alexis Tolstoi belong to the nobility; Dostoievski came from the class of the poorer nobility; Koltsov and Gorki came from the people.

In the sphere of art they have produced nothing worth speaking of. Their positive achievements are confined to historical writing, to science, medicine, and speculative thought; to minor fiction and to stage plays. Even the two prophets of the revolution, Herzen and Bakunin, were aristocrats, and Prince Kropotkin is a prince. On the other hand, it may be said that the Russian *Intelligenzia* form the youngest intellectual *tiers état* in Europe; the most immature, and at the same time the most intellectually over-ripe; they may go through many transformations and produce fruits in the future. Moreover, in spite of their not having produced a great man, their collective influence had a positive effect in bringing about reform, however mistaken their methods may have been, and however far their reform may fall short of their ideal.

One might also speak of their failure to produce a statesman. Until 1905 this was impossible, but from 1905 onwards they had the same chance as the French *tiers état* had at the beginning of 1789, and it was perhaps a merciful providence which prevented the power from falling into their hands, and saved them from proving to the world their incapacity for handling it. They are as yet politically unripe; their whole action during the revolutionary movement was a prolonged proof of their political immaturity, their lack of political instinct.

Before taking leave of the question of the *Intelligenzia*, it is perhaps advisable to repeat once more that all I have said in this chapter and the foregoing chapter with regard to them would be inadequate and unfair if I had aimed at giving a complete picture and description of them as a class, since their qualities and their positive merits have been left out. But I repeat once more that the point at issue here is their *political* action in the movement they made towards reform; if we consider them from this point of view, it can only be said that whatever their qualities as a class may be, their faults, as far as the task in question was concerned, outweighed them. Their qualities were not strong enough to have a positive result; their faults *were* strong enough to have a negative result. The authors of *Landmarks* quote the saying that every country has the government which

it deserves; they add that if ever the application of this saying was justified, it was so now in the case of the Russian *Intelligenzia*. This seems to me undeniable. It would be wrong, however, to consider that the revolutionary movement, although it failed to do what the *Intelligenzia* meant it to do, produced purely negative results.

If you talk to-day to Russians who belong to the *Intelligenzia* about the political situation, they will generally begin by telling you that things are worse than ever, that the revolution produced nothing at all, that Russia has gone backwards rather than forwards. If you ask them to substantiate the statement by examples, they will be unable to do so. If you pursue the question further and go into it in detail, they will admit that it is not so. If you recall to them in detail the state of things in pre-revolutionary Russia, they will gradually admit the vast difference. In the first place, one thing which has been achieved and which makes an incalculable difference is the comparative freedom of the Press.

Until the death of Pleve, the Press was practically muzzled in Russia. In 1865 a Press law had been made which was an adaptation of Napoleon III's Press law, drawn up by Persigny in 1865. This was considered at the time to be an almost dangerously Liberal measure. It was changed by further statutes in 1872 and 1882. The Government kept an eye on the starting of periodicals; and no editor who was not finally approved of by the Censor as being "well intentioned," that is to say, loyal, could start a newspaper at all. There was, moreover, an abundance of coercive measures which could be brought to bear on a newspaper. After three consecutive warnings a newspaper could be suppressed; after which it would come under the regulation of "previous censure." This meant that it had to receive the sanction of the censorship previous to appearing. The right of printing advertisements could also be taken from it. In addition to this, the Minister of the Interior could taboo certain subjects, which were then not allowed to be mentioned. All subjects such as political trials, the state of the peasantry, agitation among workmen, religious disturbances, anti-Jewish riots, cholera, and all political gossip, were tabooed in this way.

With the death of Pleve this state of things came to an end; the newspapers began to speak openly of everything; Liberal

and Radical papers grew up like mushrooms; and Russia was literally flooded with every kind of pamphlet on every conceivable subject. The Press, freed from its long bondage, ran riot; but taking the nature and length of that bondage into consideration, it cannot be said that its licence was either surprising or excessive. It never, for instance, reached the moral pitch of violence of the French provincial press.

Until the dissolution of the first Duma, the Press followed its own sweet will. But when the first Duma was dissolved, owing to the introduction of various forms of martial law all over the country, the Press was once more subjected to a certain measure of control. Certain newspapers were forbidden to appear for a time. Professor Kovalevski's newspaper, the *Strana*, for instance, was suspended for a time. Owing to the loss incurred, this suspension was equivalent to suppression.

The position of the Press in Russia at the present day is as follows: there is no "previous censure," either in theory or in fact. In the old Pleve days, although a newspaper was not in theory subjected to previous censure, it was so in fact. Representatives of the censorship used to visit the newspaper offices with a blue pencil and cut out certain articles or paragraphs. This occurred in the office of the *Novoe Vremya* on the eve of the outbreak of the war. An article on the probability of war had been written; a representative of the Government visited the office and cut out the article, saying that all possibility of war was out of the question. The next morning the news of the Japanese attack on Port Arthur was being sold in the streets.

To-day this does not happen, nor is a newspaper forbidden to appear. The newspapers can, in theory, print any news they please, and say what they wish. But—there is a comprehensive but—they can be fined. The governor in every province can issue what is called a compulsory standing order, according to which a newspaper is (*a*) not allowed to say anything abusive of the Government; and (*b*) not allowed to spread false news. If it prints anything which is considered to come under either of these two headings, it can be fined 500 roubles (£50). A series of such fines is, of course, enough to break a newspaper; and as the two headings are elastic and vague, a great deal depends on the personal view of the local governor. Such fines in the provincial, Polish, and sometimes in the Moscow press, are frequent and

baseless. Therefore one can justly say that the freedom of the Russian Press is still only comparative.

Portions of foreign newspapers are still blacked out, and the censorship on all books coming from abroad still obtains. The result of this last institution is a series of anomalies. For instance, you can sometimes buy in St. Petersburg, in Russian, the translation of a book which you cannot receive by post in its original tongue. Sometimes absurd mistakes are made. It was impossible in 1910, for instance (and it may still be so now), to obtain a copy of Mr. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*, which was probably thought, from the title, to be a subversive work on the Russian Orthodox Church. In spite of this the difference, as far as freedom of expression is concerned, in the public press, magazines, and pamphlets, between the present day and the days of Pleve, is vast. It is not a difference of degree, but a difference of kind.

The censorship of the stage is not stricter than it is in England, as far as politics and religion are concerned, while with regard to all other subjects, it is so much less severe that even comparison is impossible. There is practically no censorship over the morality of the Russian stage, save that of the public. Mr. Shaw's play, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, which is forbidden in England, was produced at the State-paid Imperial Theatre of St. Petersburg: the home of tradition and the centre of Conservatism, the Theâtre Français of Russia. The system of letting the public judge for itself in such matters seems to work well. Gorki, for instance, produced a play in Moscow, in which there was a scene that revolted the public. They hissed it, and the obnoxious scene was withdrawn before the next performance.

Why the censorship on foreign literature is still maintained is a mystery. The question was raised during the sittings of the second Duma, but I do not think it has been mentioned since then.

The second, and indeed the truly positive achievement of the revolutionary movement is the existence of the Duma. The Duma, whatever its nature may be, whatever may be the colour of the opinions of its members, whatever the restrictions which limit its power, exercises by the mere fact of its existence an important positive and an important negative influence: a positive influence in that it is a public place, where any member of

it may speak his mind, and say what he pleases, and know that his words will be reported in the Press. Questions can also be asked of the Government, and answers are given. The negative influence, which is almost as important, is that all over the country, the officials know that if they do anything glaringly wrong, there is always the chance of their misdeeds being made public and discussed in the Duma. This acts as a check and as a preventive: the Duma, that is to say, by its mere existence exercises a certain indirect control over the administration.

Another positive reform which was the result of the revolutionary movement, and which may in the future have far-reaching effects, is the law of June 14, 1910, dealing with the ownership of land by the peasants.

I have already discussed this question in a preceding chapter; it is sufficient to say here that whatever may be the ultimate result of this law, it is a serious measure of reform, a real effort made by the Government towards the amelioration of the condition of the peasantry.

A further step taken by the Government in the direction of reform was the introduction of a Bill on the subject of universal compulsory education, which has been passed by the Duma, and some parts of which have already been passed by the Council of Empire. It is to the effect that the local provincial county councils shall receive yearly from the Government a sum of about £30 or £40 in order to pay the salary of one teacher for every fifty children of the population, on the condition that the County Councils shall undertake to build enough schools, in the period of ten years, to meet the educational needs of the whole population of their respective districts. It is unnecessary to point out that the results of such a Bill must necessarily be important.

With regard to other changes, which have or have not resulted from the revolutionary movement in the government, and in the administration of the country, in order to appreciate the difference between the regime of the past and of the present in Russia, all we have to do is to read the Emperor's Manifesto of October 17 (October 30, N.S.), and to ascertain how far and in what manner its principles have been carried out. The Emperor declared that he charged the Government with the

execution of his unalterable will, as expressed in the three following clauses:—

"I. To grant to the people the immutable foundations of civic liberty, based on the principle of real inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, speech, union, societies, and association.

"II. To enable as far as possible, and as far as the shortness of the period before the convocation of the Duma shall allow, those classes of the population to take part in it which are at present altogether deprived of electoral rights, and to leave the ultimate development of the principle of electoral rights to the newly established order of legislature.

"III. To establish as an immutable principle that no law shall come into force which shall not receive the sanction of the National Duma; that the deputies chosen by the people shall have the veritable right of participating in the supervision of the acts of the administrative servants whom we appoint."

With regard to the principles here enunciated, two of them: the existence of the Duma and the freedom of the Press, have already been discussed. There remain, therefore, out of Clause I:

(1) The inviolability of the person
(2) Freedom of conscience;
(3) Freedom of organizing public meetings;
(4) The right of founding unions and associations.

Firstly, no fresh legislation with regard to the inviolability of the person has been sanctioned by the Government. A Bill on this subject was introduced by the Government during the third session of the present Duma, but it was rejected by the Duma, because it did not affect the root of the question. The laws of the country which guarantee a slightly protracted form of *Habeas Corpus* still obtain; but they can at any moment be made null and void, owing to the existence of a state of "extraordinary protection," which is in reality the mildest gradation of martial law. This state of "extraordinary protection," where it is enforced, enables the governor of a province or the governor of a town to cause a man to be arrested by administrative order, "to be imprisoned without trial or exiled from the town

or province in question."[1] The inviolability of the person is therefore still in the region of dreams in Russia, and does not exist in practice.

(2) Freedom of conscience. A law aiming at religious tolerance has been passed. Mixed marriages between Orthodox Russians and Catholic Poles are now allowed. Moreover, if there are fifty members of any religious denomination, in any place in Russia, they are allowed to build a church where the form of public worship which they favour can be carried on. But there is a clause in the law forbidding all propaganda, and this clause is wide and vague; for propaganda is not defined, and consequently what can be interpreted as propaganda varies with the different points of view of the various local authorities. The Salvation Army is not allowed to enter Russia, and measures are promptly taken against anything which is considered to be in the nature of propaganda.

(3) The freedom of public assembly depends entirely on the good will of the local governor. No political or any other meetings in the streets or in public places are allowed at all; and in order to give a public lecture or for a member of the Duma to deliver a public report to his electors on the proceedings of the Duma, the permission of the governor is necessary. In the provincial towns even concerts have to receive the preliminary sanction of the governor, and the programmes are sometimes revised by him. A little while ago Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* was cut out of the programme of a concert by a local governor, who was apparently under the impression that as Tolstoi had written a novel bearing that title, the performance of the sonata might have a subversive effect on the audience.

(4) The right of founding societies. This is strictly under Government control. Practically no political clubs are sanctioned unless they are Conservative. The Constitutional Democrats are not allowed to have a club. Clause 2 of the Manifesto related especially to the elections of the first Duma. It was carried out, but the second portion of it, providing that legislation with regard to the franchise should be initiated exclusively by the Duma, was practically rendered null, because the Government inserted an emergency clause (Clause 87) in the fundamental

[1] "Extraordinary protection" exists to this day in many places in Russia, notably in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

laws of the State, which enables the Emperor to promulgate laws in cases of emergency when the Houses are not in session, subject to their being subsequently submitted to them for approval. This clause has been taken advantage of twice. It enabled the Government by means of the Senate, and over the head of the Duma, to promulgate a new electoral law, which changed the nature of the franchise. This was morally a violation of Clause 3 although technically legal. It may be said also that the Government was practically justified in doing this, owing to the revolutionary character of the second Duma. The emergency clause was taken advantage of a second time in April, 1911, by Mr. Stolypin. This matter is too recent for discussion here. The question of the change in the electoral law is a perplexing one. The second Duma was largely composed of revolutionary elements. Its constructive and more moderate members showed but scant statesmanship and legislative capacity. It was argued, on the other hand, that the Government, by exercising pressure during elections on the more moderate Liberal elements in the country, was responsible for creating a Duma of extremes.

Here we have the whole problem of popular representation in Russia. The moment you get true representation (without pressure) you get nothing but extreme Radicals and revolutionaries, because the great majority of Russians are simply and solely "agin the Government." If, on the other hand, you limit the franchise to ensure a preponderance of Conservative opinion, you tend to create merely a lifeless addition to the bureaucratic machine. This is what Russians are complaining of at the present day; this is the dilemma which faces them. But popular representation in Russia is still in its infancy: it has made a beginning, and it cannot be said that the beginning has proved fruitless. On the contrary, it has proved fruitful. Moreover, in spite of the limited fashion in which the principles of the Manifesto of October have been carried out in practice, it would be inaccurate to say that the Manifesto is now a dead letter.

The Duma, by its mere existence, is a guarantee that the principles enunciated in the Manifesto will not be allowed to disappear from the view of the public, and that efforts towards their realization will, as long as the Duma exists, be certain to find expression. Again, the Duma, whatever its nature may

be, is, as I have already said, by its very existence in itself a realization of one of the most important principles of the Manifesto.

When P. A. Stolypin took office, he took as his watchword "Order first, and then reform." During the five years of his administration order has been restored in Russia, and owing to the exceptionally good harvests of 1909–1910, the material prosperity of the country has been vastly increased. As to reform, in carrying out his agrarian and his educational policy, two vital and serious efforts have been made which are certain to have far-reaching results in the future. As to whether further political reform will be carried out in the nature of controlling the acts of the local administration, in securing political liberty for the individual, and in waking to life the dormant clauses of the Manifesto, only the future can show. One thing is certain: there will always be a large section of the population in Russia who will demand such reform. The history of the past shows us that, if it is not given from above, efforts will be made to take it from below. Whether it will be obtained by agitation from below will depend on the action of those who make that effort. It will depend on whether they will be able to achieve and to maintain the support of public opinion. Supposing they were successful, it would still be a question whether political liberty would become a reality. There would still be the danger under a Radical Government, however violent the method of its establishment might be, of radical and revolutionary principles proving as despotic as the acts of the old regime. For until the individual Russian, and especially the individual Radical Russian, learns the lesson of self-discipline, it will be difficult for him to enjoy the particular benefits conferred by political liberty, which cannot exist without self-discipline. Certain Russians argue that this day will never come: that the Russian does not really want political liberty; that his temperament does not need it, although he may clamour for it with his lips. They say every Russian prefers the benefits of individual licence, in spite of its many drawbacks, to the individual discipline which is indispensable to the enjoyment of collective political liberty. In other words, the argument is that the Russians ask for political liberty, but are not prepared to pay the necessary price for it.

But here we enter into realms of pure speculation; the question is one which only the future can decide. It is certainly true that a large part of the thinking and educated class of Russian people are still profoundly discontented with the political state of affairs in Russia. This discontent will continue to exist until further attempts are made to remove it. But all question of reform in Russia will depend primarily not on the introduction of fresh legislation, however revolutionary, but on the conduct not only of those who govern, but of those who are governed.

I have often heard English politicians say, "What Russia wants is a *Habeas Corpus*. If they could get that, then everything would be right." They do not perceive that the introduction of a *Habeas Corpus* would make no kind or sort of difference as long as the executive authority can practically suspend or overrule any kind of law, *and as long as this state of things is not only accepted but sometimes encouraged by the majority of the population.* Moreover, in thinking of any possible changes in Russian legislation or Russian administration, the psychology of the ordinary Russian must be taken into consideration. It never is taken into consideration. It should be remembered that a by-law or a legislative act which appears to us as an ordinary and indispensable safeguard of some collective kind of order may appear to the Russian an intolerable piece of tyranny; and what seems to us an intolerable piece of tyranny may seem to him an indispensable measure of public safety.

For instance, Mr. Churchill was censured in the House of Commons not long ago for remitting a portion of the sentences passed by magistrates on two boys, one of whom had been imprisoned for loafing about on the chance of calling somebody a cab, and the other for using obscene language. Sentences such as these would be as unthinkable to Russians as it would be to an Englishman to be sent to Scotland, or to some other desert place, for harbouring Socialistic literature, or to be fined £50 for attacking the Government in a newspaper.

At the base of all possible reform lies the Russian temperament; the nature of all discontent with the actual state of things and the shape reform and all future remedies may take, will ultimately depend upon the evolution and expression of that temperament. On a point such as this prophecy is obviously futile.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ORTHODOX EASTERN CHURCH AND THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

THE third volume of M. Leroy Beaulieu's great book on Russia is entirely devoted to religion, the Church, the clergy, sects, and the varieties of belief. M. Leroy Beaulieu, at the beginning of this volume, says that he is well aware that so lengthy a treatment of such a subject will cause surprise in many quarters. Many people, he says, will be inclined to repeat a phrase he himself heard used by Morny, apropos of a religious work of Guizot's, namely, "Comment, de notre temps, peut-on s'occuper de pareilles questions?" He goes on to say that a study of Russian life which would leave out religion, as a factor in it, would be omitting the foundation and the support of Russian society. Religion in Russia is the principal, if not the sole, mainstay of society and social concord. It is for this reason, M. Leroy Beaulieu tells us, that he devoted a whole volume to an analysis of the Russian religion and the Russian Church.

In order to give anything approaching a full picture to the English reader of religion in Russia, and of the nature and history of the Russian Church, a thick volume would be barely sufficient. But apart from the fact that I doubt whether the general reader would have the patience to plod through such a volume, it would be beyond the scope of this book to attempt a detailed history and an exhaustive analysis of the Russian Church. What I will endeavour to give the reader is the clearest and the barest sketch of the history of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and to sum up as briefly as possible the chief characteristics of religion in Russia, within and without the Church.

Boys in England are not taught even a grain of religious

history; the history of the early Church and its Councils is not mentioned to them. It is not surprising, therefore, that so many Englishmen should have such vague ideas as to what a church is, and should be completely in the dark as to the early history of Christianity.

Before the foundation of Constantinople in A.D. 330, throughout the Empire and all Europe there existed a Catholic Church, greater than all the heretics put together, united under the Pope of Rome as first Patriarch, and in union with him the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. In the eleventh century a schism broke up this unity and divided a large fragment of the Eastern Church from the Western Church.

That is the principal fact.

When Byzantium became Constantinople, and the seat of government was transferred thither, the Bishop of Constantinople gradually acquired an exceptional position. The rise of the See of Constantinople and the jealousy which it caused is probably one of the chief reasons of the schism. During the fifth and sixth centuries Constantinople became the centre of general Christian history; so-called œcumenical councils were summoned there by the Emperors: five of them were held either at or near Constantinople. The object of these councils was to maintain the unity of the Catholic Church.

Controversies on points of dogma arose which were settled by the councils, which were summoned in turn to condemn a particular heresy. But although the Emperor summoned them, he was not allowed to interfere in questions of doctrine. The councils had to be convoked with the consent of the Pope, and be presided over by him, or by his Legates. The decrees of a council had to have his approval. "In formulating doctrine," Sir Charles Eliot says in his *Turkey in Europe*, "the Church accepted the collaboration, but not the authority of the Emperor." "The Councils," he says a little farther on, "implicitly affirmed that Christian doctrine is a subject for faith and not for reason. Each heresy condemned was a well-meaning though presumptuous attempt to offer an explanation of the Godhead conceivable for the human mind. In every case the Church replied by formulating a mystery to be believed by faith, but, strictly speaking, inconceivable and incomprehensible for our finite intelligence."

The First General Council was held at Nicæa in 325. This council

drew up what is known as the Nicene Creed, and condemned the doctrine of Arius which denied the divinity of Our Lord and His consubstantiality with the Father.

The Second General Council was summoned at Constantinople in 381; it condemned the Macedonian heresy which denied the personality of the Holy Ghost. It also wanted to give the second rank to Constantinople because Constantinople was the "new Rome." But this was not accepted by the Pope.

The Third Council was summoned at Ephesus in 431. At this council the doctrine of Nestorius was condemned, the Nestorian doctrine being that the Blessed Virgin was mother only of the man Christ to whom the Divine Person had morally united Himself. The Nestorians, therefore, denied to the Blessed Virgin the title of "Theotokos" or Mother of God. Unlike the Macedonian and Arian heresies, Nestorianism did not disappear. It produced a schism in the extreme East of the Empire, and then a national Church in Persia, which exists and proselytizes till this day. The head-quarters of the sect are now on the borders of Persia (in the district of Hekkiari).

The Fourth Council, held at Chalcedon (the modern Cadikeui, opposite Constantinople, in Asia Minor) in 451, under Pope Leo the Great, changed the honorary rank of Jerusalem into a real patriarchate and extended the power of Constantinople. It condemned a heresy which was a reaction against that of Nestorius, namely, the doctrine of the Monophysites. The Nestorian heresy destroyed the unity of Christ by affirming that there were in Him two persons as well as two natures. These two persons, the Person of God and that of man, were, they held, bound together by a merely moral union. The Monophysite heresy did exactly the opposite: in order to preserve this unity they confounded the two natures by teaching that the human nature was transformed or absorbed into the divine, and that after the incarnation Christ existed only in His divine nature. Monophysism was the cause of permanent schismatical national churches in Egypt and Syria and cut off all Armenia. In spite of this, and in spite of Nestorian and Monophysite and further heresies, the majority of Christendom still formed one Catholic Church, united under the Pope of Rome as first Patriarch, and in union with him, the Catholic patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

The Fifth Council is the second of Constantinople. It was held in 553, and confirmed by Pope Vigilius. It condemned the so-called "Three Chapters" which favoured the doctrines of Nestorius. Though neither the Pope nor the Legates attended, the council is considered œcumenical, because it afterwards received the sanction of the Pope.

The Sixth Council, the third of Constantinople, condemned the heresy of the Monothelites, who maintained that in Jesus Christ there was only one operation and one will, the Divine will.

The Seventh Council, the second of Nicæa, was held in the Church of St. Sofia in 787. In this council the Iconoclasts or breakers of images were condemned for rejecting the use of holy images. The Pope approved its decisions. Rome and Constantinople were at one.

In all, seven councils were held before the schism and were acknowledged as œcumenical by the East and the West.[1] The Eastern Orthodox Church is the fruit of these councils, and of the Iconoclastic movement.

After the Nestorian heresy had produced a schism in the extreme East, and a national church in Persia; after Monophysism had established permanent national schismatical churches in Egypt and Syria, and had cut off all Armenia, Islam overran Egypt, Syria, and Palestine; and Constantinople became the head of the Eastern Churches and grew to be jealous of Rome. But the canon law both of the East and the West recognized the five patriarchates as well as Cyprus, which became autocephalous after the third council in 431. The Eastern Fathers and the councils acknowledged the primacy of the Pope,[2] but the Eastern Bishops were inclined to resent his interference when he used it.[3] While, on the one hand, Constantinople grew more and more jealous of Rome, the Popes were not always wise in their relations to the East: the result was friction and ill-feeling between the East and the West.

The actual schism came about in the ninth century. In 846

[1] Every schoolboy in Russia is taught the history of the councils. Every educated man in Russia is familiar with their substance. "The General Councils are still familiar names to the laity and peasantry of the East."—Sir C. Eliot.

[2] The primacy of the Pope is confirmed by every one of the councils which Catholics and Orthodox agree in considering œcumenical: unless we except two (the Second and the Fifth) which were irregular, but received the papal confirmation afterwards.

[3] See *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, Adrian Fortescue, and *Turkey in Europe*, Sir Charles Eliot.

Ignatius became Patriarch of Constantinople. He reigned for eleven years in peace; then, because he refused to give Holy Communion to the Regent Bardas, the brother of Theodora, the widow of the Emperor Theophilus, because of the immorality of his life,[1] the Government deposed and banished him, setting up in his place Photius, who was the Commander of the Imperial Guard, private secretary to the Emperor, and, though a soldier, famous for his erudition. He was at once consecrated deacon, priest, and bishop. Both Photius and Ignatius appealed to the Pope, Nicholas I (858–67). The Pope in 863 pronounced the deposition of Photius. Photius then turned what was a quarrel between two candidates to the See of Constantinople, into a general contest between East and West. He boldly accused the Pope of heresy. He excommunicated all the West because Latins (1) fast on Saturday; (2) do not begin Lent until Ash-Wednesday; (3) despise married priests; (4) refuse to acknowledge the validity of confirmation conferred by a priest; and (5) have added the *Filioque* to the Creed.

The last point was his chief weapon, because points one and two are rubbish, and points three and four are not true. With regard to the *Filioque*, the matter is like this. The Council of Constantinople completed the third article of the Nicene Creed with the following phrase: "The Holy Ghost . . . Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified. . . ." This so-called *Filioque* clause was added in Spain in the fifth century as a check to Arianism. The matter was debated at the council of Aix-la-Chapelle in 809, and though the Pope refused to make a definite pronouncement on the subject, the formula was gradually inserted into the Roman creed. What followed is complicated.

The Eastern and Western Churches remained in nominal union for more than a century and a half after this; the reason no doubt being that at this period it was inconceivable to men that there should be more than one church in the sense of more than one religion. There had often been controversy before, and it had generally ended in the expulsion of a small number from the Church and the confirmation of the unity of the main body. No one conceived it to be possible that the Church might be permanently split into two halves. "About

[1] He was living in a state of incest.

A.D. 850," says Sir Charles Eliot, " no one had any idea of there being more than one church in the sense of more than one religion. There were churches of Constantinople, Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, just as there are in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America churches which are practically identical with the English Church; but there was nothing akin to the modern idea of a Christianity divided into Roman Catholics, Greeks, Armenians, Protestants, Irvingites, and all the other religious denomination catalogued in Whitaker. There existed only the Church—apt to split into factions over questions of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but still essentially one—and heretics." Nevertheless, the rivalry between the Greeks and the Latins and the ill-feeling growing out of this rivalry continued to increase, and the quarrel broke out again in 1053 under the Patriarch Michael Cerularius. He suddenly closed all the Latin churches and convents in Constantinople. At the same time the Normans invaded Apulia; and as they acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope, the district became united to the Roman Church. This led Cerularius, in concert with the Bulgarian Archbishop of Ochrida, to attack the Westerns; he called them half Jews, half pagans, stigmatized the use of unleavened bread for the Holy Eucharist, accused the Bishops of shaving their beards and wearing rings, and the monks of eating meat on Wednesdays and of fasting on Saturday during Lent, and of eating the flesh of animals strangled.

The Pope Leo IX sent Legates to Constantinople to see if peace could be restored; but finding all attempts at reconciliation useless, he excommunicated Cerularius and his partisans on July 16, 1054. " The event," says Sir Charles Eliot, " though often obscured and misunderstood by being regarded as a trivial ecclesiastical dispute, ranks, with the foundation of Constantinople and the coronation of Charlemagne, as one of the turning points in the relations of the West and East. Above all, it was for the East of cardinal and doleful import. In it found expression that dull antagonism, that deep-rooted want of sympathy between the two late geographical divisions of Christendom, which prevented them from ever combining against the common aggressor, and which thus proved the main causes of the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the establishment of the Turk in Europe. . . . One interesting point about the schism under Cerularius is that until it was a *fait accompli* nothing was said

about the procession of the Holy Ghost. Even the position of the Pope was not much discussed. Cerularius appears to have been ready to allow him a general primacy and to have called Constantinople the daughter of Rome; and there is no proof that he put forward any excessive claims on behalf of his own see. The points at issue were all trivial and external. It is a clear proof that the popular conscience of Eastern Europe must have felt that the Latins were essentially alien and hostile, otherwise no religion could have divided on such ridiculous pretexts."

The Bishops of the patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were excommunicated for taking the side of Cerularius; but Rome has never excommunicated the Eastern Church as such. The great schism has lasted since then. Various attempts were made to heal it[1] in 1098 at the Synod of Bari; in 1168 at Constantinople by Alexander III; but the most important of these efforts are, firstly, the second council of Lyons in 1274. At this meeting the union was proclaimed and the Greeks approved the *Filioque*, although they treated the question as being non-important. On St. Peter's Day High Mass was celebrated in St. Sofia to mark the union of the churches. The Gospel was read in Latin and Greek and the Pope prayed for. But already in 1281 the union was not even kept up as a fiction.

Secondly, the council of Florence in 1439. Here the Greeks yielded to the Latins on almost every point. The supremacy of the Pope was recognized and the *Filioque* clause admitted to be synonymous with the Greek formula, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father through the Son.

On July 6, 1439, an act of union was signed and sanctioned by the Pope. But when the representatives of the Eastern Church returned home, they found that they were regarded as traitors and apostates.

In 1443 the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem denounced the union and abjured communion with Rome. Thus a vast church, the second greatest in Christendom, the Orthodox Eastern Church, has remained. It has between ninety and a hundred million members. It is obvious that the cause of

[1] In Constantinople there are at the present moment Greeks who regard the matter as still being under discussion and regard reunion with Rome as a possibility: but the old jealousy exists exactly as it was in 800.

the schism was neither theological nor ecclesiastic, but racial, and proceeded from the hatred and rivalry which existed between the Latins and the Greeks.

At the present day the Orthodox Eastern Church consists of sixteen independent churches, all in union with each other (except for some modern schisms) and with the œcumenical patriarchs. Of these the only one which concerns us here is the Russian Church.

Russia was converted to Christianity in the year 988 when Vladimir, the son of Sviatoslav, became Christian and forced his people to be converted. Russia adopted the Byzantine form of Christianity, and this was to have a profound effect on Russian history. When Russia was converted to Christianity, the Greeks were still formally in communion with Rome after the temporary schism of Photius. But the Eastern Church was already saturated with the spirit of nationalism, which arose out of the policy of the Emperors and the acrimonious disputes of the Greek schools.

" When the Russian people," says Vladimir Soloviev, " brought the pearl of the Gospels through St. Vladimir, it was already covered over with the dust of Byzantium." After the schism of Cerularius, Russia remained in communion with Rome for about a century,[1] but afterwards took the side of her Patriarch. As I have already said, the anathema of the Pope Leo IX was not directed against the Eastern Church as such, but simply and solely against the person of the Patriarch, Michael Cerularius, and those who shared his folly, a folly which, according to Soloviev, is sufficiently obvious. On the other hand, the Eastern Church has never been able to summon an œcumenical council which, according to its own theologians, would be the only tribunal competent to settle its differences with Rome. A Russian hierarchy was established under the Metropolitan of Kiev and was added to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. After the Mongol invasion (1222–1480) Moscow had a rival Metropolitan.

In 1589 Job, the Metropolitan of Moscow, was consecrated Patriarch by Jeremias,[2] Patriarch of Constantinople, in the reign

[1] Hilarion, the fifth Russian Metropolitan (1051–72), and his successors, George, John I, John II, Ephrium I, and Nicolas I (1096–1106), did not support the schism of Cerularius, but were in union with Rome. See Theiner, *Vicissitudes de l'Eglise Catholique*, p. 10.

[2] It was Boris Godunov who brought about the establishment of the Russian Patriarch. He wished to obtain the support of the clergy in Russia.

of Feodor, the son of Ivan the Terrible; and the Russian Church was acknowledged to be no longer subject to Constantinople. In 1591 a Synod of the other orthodox patriarchates confirmed the acknowledgment and gave the Patriarch of Moscow the fifth place after Jerusalem.

About this time a critical movement, whose object was intellectual and social reform, started in the Church. The central figure of the movement was the Patriarch Nikon. The question which started it was the revision of the liturgical books which that Patriarch raised.

In 1642, one day in the Cathedral of the Assumption, where all Tsars, since Ivan IV, and all Emperors of Russia were crowned, the Tsar Alexis threw himself at the feet of Nikon, the Metropolitan, and implored him not to refuse the acceptance of the patriarchal throne, to which he had been elected by the council. Six years later, in the same cathedral, Nikon, after saying Mass, divested himself of the robes of his office, and declared that he was no longer Patriarch. During these six years there had been a conflict between the State and the Church. The Tsar resented the pretensions of the Patriarch.[1] Nikon was summoned before an ecclesiastical council, which consisted of representatives of the Russian clergy and was presided over by the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch. The conduct of Nikon was blamed, and he was forced to resign definitively; he spent the rest of his life in a convent. But in spite of his condemnation, the revision which he had made of the liturgical books was accepted and approved by the council. Owing to the continuous copying and recopying of these books many inaccuracies had crept into the text. As long as the liturgical books existed only in manuscript, the copyist could always be made responsible, but as soon as they began to be printed the mistakes acquired a kind of finality. Nikon was the first to take notice of the existence of these errors, and to undertake a thorough revision of the books according to the Greek texts. He sent an Archimandrite to Constantinople to collect copies of the Greek originals from which the Russian books had been translated, and his sole object was to restore the correct text. Although the work was necessary, as far as

[1] "Nikone est le Thomas Becket de l'orthodoxie Moscovite. Sous son pontificat, la Russie assiste, pour la première et pour la dernière fois, au vieux duel du sacerdoce et de l'Empire que M. de Bismarck faisait un jour remonter à Calchas et à Agamemnon."—Leroy Beaulieu.

public opinion was concerned, it was carried out too late, since the greater part of the people rejected the text revised by Nikon and clung to the older and unrevised books. This produced the great schism of the Russian Church. Those who refused Nikon's reform called themselves "Old Believers." They were from the beginning persecuted by the Government, and the more they were persecuted the more fanatical they became. Peter the Great, who was tolerant towards every sect, made an exception in their case and persecuted them. In addition to the revision of the text, they accused Nikon of having introduced reforms, which to them were abominations, such as making the sign of the cross with three fingers instead of with two; of pronouncing the Holy Name "Iisus" instead of "Isus," and of saying in the creed "the Holy Ghost, Lord and Life-giver," instead of "True One and Life-giver"; of reducing the number of prostrations during service, and of having the Alleluia sung three times instead of twice in the Liturgy. They declared that the Church, on account of these innovations, had become the kingdom of Antichrist, and that they alone were the true Church.

The fall of Nikon was a preliminary step towards the abolition of the Russian Patriarchate. Its abolition is the next step of importance in the history of the Russian Church. The Patriarchate was suppressed by Peter the Great in 1721. In its place he established the Holy Directing Synod, which was to rule the Church of Russia. This was a part of Peter the Great's larger and general system of government by colleges; just as civil government was carried on by civil colleges, the government of the Church was to be carried on by an ecclesiastical College[1] (see chapter XIII.). The Holy Synod, whose constitution has remained unchanged since its formation, consists of the Metropolitans of Kiev, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the Exarch of Georgia. Besides these, the Emperor appoints five or six other bishops, or archimandrites, to sit in it, his chaplain, and the head chaplain of the forces. The Synod is practically, although not theoretically, under the control of the Procurator of the Synod, who is a layman and has sometimes been an officer of high rank in the army. Thus, as Sir Charles Eliot says, "this peculiar constitution has produced in Russia an almost Mohammedan confusion of Church and State, or, at least, of religion and politics."

[1] "Pourque la Russie n'ait qu'une tête, il décapite l'Eglise."—Leroy Beaulieu.

The Russian Church is *in practice* governed by Imperial ukases. At the meetings of the Holy Synod an oath is taken by its members which runs as follows: " I acknowledge him [the Emperor] to be the supreme judge in this spiritual assembly," etc.

No orthodox Russian, however, would admit that the Emperor is the head of the Orthodox Church. The Russians declare that the head of their Church is Our Lord, and that the only authority which they recognize as speaking in His name is the Church as far as the first seven councils. In theory they regard the Emperor as the temporal defender and guardian, and not as the head of the Church; and the Emperor does not, as the King of England, claim to be the head of the Church; theoretically, in questions of dogma he has no more authority than the humblest of the orthodox faithful. Theoretically, dogma remains outside the domain of the Holy Synod; and since Russians believe that all questions of dogma have been settled once and for all by the first seven œcumenical councils, it is unlikely that the question of interference in matters of dogma could arise. Theoretically, the Emperor's authority solely concerns the *administration* of the Church; even disciplinary measures only come before the Holy Synod as before a commission of inquiry, the final decision remaining with the Church. The duty of the Procurator consists in seeing that the Imperial ukases, with regard to the administration of the Church, are properly carried out. He is the intermediary between the Emperor and the Holy Synod.

Nevertheless, although the only authority which the Russian Church recognizes, in theory, is that of Our Lord and of the seven councils, the Russian Church is, in practice, a *State* church; for, if one asks through whom it is that Our Lord governs His Church, the answer cannot fail to be, " In practice, through the Holy Synod, and not through the Bishops, because the Synod overrules the Bishops, and the Procurator practically (whatever the theory may be) rules the Synod, and the Procurator represents the civil government."

The Russian Church is not only a State church, but the most peculiarly national of State churches. All foreign observers have borne witness to this. This is what M. Leroy Beaulieu says: " L'autocratie, telle est la clef de l'Église Russe. Veut-on

en comprendre les destinées et la constitution, il faut sans cesse se répéter que c'est une Eglise d'état, et d'un État autocratique." But the fact of the Russian Church being a State church not only strikes foreign observers, but has been vehemently commented on by patriotic Russians and orthodox Russians; and it has led in the past, in the present, and it will probably lead in the future, many thoughtful members of the Russian communion to protest against the spiritual deadness and the lack of liberty which are the inevitable result of the subjection of the Church to the civil authority. For instance, a patriotic Russian and an orthodox Russian, I. S. Aksakov, has written as follows about the condition of his Church: "On sait que l'Eglise russe est gouvernée par un conseil administratif appelé collège spirituel ou Saint Synode, dont les membres sont nommés par l'empereur et subordonnés à un employé civil ou militaire (le procureur supérieur du Saint Synode) auquel appartient toute l'initiative du gouvernement ecclésiastique. Les diocèses (éparchies) sont nominalement gouvernés par des évêques, nommés par le chef de l'Etat sur la recommandation du Synode, c'est-à-dire du procureur supérieur qui les déplace ensuite selon son bon plaisir.

"Les degrés hiérarchiques du clergé ont été consignés dans 'la Table des rangs' et mis en correspondance exacte avec les grades militaires. Un métropolite équivaut à un maréchal ('général complet' selon l'expression russe), un archevêque—à un général de division ('général lieutenant'), un évêque—à un général de brigade ('général-major'). Quant aux prêtres, ils peuvent avec un peu de zèle parvenir jusqu'au grade de colonel. Paul Ier n'a été que conséquent en décorant de cordons militaires les hauts personnages de l'Eglise."[1]

. . . . . .

"Ainsi notre Eglise, du côté de son gouvernement, apparaît somme une espèce de bureau ou de chancellerie colossale qui applique à l'office de paître le troupeau du Christ tous les procédés du bureaucratisme allemand avec tout la fausseté officielle qui leur est inhérente.[2] Le gouvernement ecclésiastique étant organisé comme un département de l'administration laïque et les ministres de l'Eglise étant mis au nombre des serviteurs de

[1] Aksakov, *Receuil complet des œuvres de I. S. Aksakov*, pp. 119–20.
[2] Aksakov, p. 124.

l'Etat, l'Eglise elle-même se transforme bientôt en une fonction du pouvoir séculier, ou tout simplement elle entre au service de l'Etat."

And, again, V. Soloviev writes: "We are told that the Emperor of Russia is a son of the Church; that is what he ought to be, if he is the head of a Christian State. But in order to be this in reality, the Church ought to be able to exercise some authority over him. The Church ought to have a power independent of that of the State and superior to it. Yet, with the best will in the world, a secular monarch cannot truly be at one and the same time the son of the Church and the head of the Church which he governs through his officials.

"The Church in Russia, deprived of all support, and of all centre of unity outside the State, has *necessarily* ended by being subject to the secular power, and since the secular power has no authority above it on the earth, and has no one from whom it could receive religious sanction—a partial delegation of the authority of Christ, it has necessarily ended in an anti-Christian absolutism."[1]

On the other hand, the Russian Church has found several warm apologists who consider it to be nearer to primitive Christianity than any other church; the most notable of these is Khomiakov, a celebrated poet and Slavophile (the father of the ex-President of the Duma), who has written a most notable apologia for the Russian Church.[2]

That is practically all there is to be said about the main events in the history of the Russian Church. Let us now consider its chief characteristics.

The most salient fact about the Russian Church is that it has remained stationary: it has not developed.

After the conversion of the Slavonic nations, that is to say, after the ninth century, the intellectual life and movement of the Orthodox Church seems to have died.

"It must not be supposed," writes Sir Charles Eliot, "that the controversies of the West led to innovations, and that the Eastern Church remained true to the primitive faith. She has simply no definite doctrines at all on a variety of points, because from inertia and, perhaps we should add, from political troubles,

[1] Soloviev, *L'Eglise Russe et l'Eglise Universelle*, p. 73.
[2] See Khomiakov, Complete Works, Vol. II.

she has never clearly posed or attempted to solve the questions that agitated the West. This attitude has some advantages. In all branches of the Eastern Church religious persecution is rare,[1] and these large, fluid views about many questions may seem to compare favourably with the rigid definitions of Roman Catholicism, and to approach the spirit of liberty and advanced Christianity. But this is not really true. The same priest who shows a becoming diffidence in laying down exactly what happens to the soul after death, is, in practice, ready to excommunicate any one who makes the sign of the cross differently from himself."

The Eastern Church boasts of a certain elasticity: it glories in not being subjected to the tyranny of the Pope; but, in being governed by the Holy Synod, it submits obviously to a power far more tyrannical than that of the Pope, because it submits to a power which is different in kind, namely, the civil authority. And what is true of the political history of Russia seems here again to be true about the Church: that the lack of discipline leads to a lack of liberty. The Russians glory in having nothing to do with the Pope: but instead of one Pope, they have an infinite number of arbitrary Popes.

Russians like to consider Orthodoxy as being something essentially Slavonic. This is not historically true. The truth is, as M. Leroy Beaulieu says, that "religion cuts the Slav world into two parts: that, historically, the Orthodoxy of the East is not more Slav than Roman Catholicism. The Russians, the Serbs, and the Bulgarians made Orthodoxy into their national religion. But the Latin Church became no less national for the Poles, the Slovenes, and even the Tchechs."

Catholic Slavs are just as much Slavs as Orthodox Slavs, and the reason that Catholic Slavs seem less national to the Russians is perhaps that they were affected by the Latin civilization which streamed from Rome. The idea of there being a *Slav* church is a fiction. The Orthodox Church in Russia has remained essentially Greek, or rather Byzantine.

A question which I have heard frequently asked in England is this, "What is the difference in matters of faith and dogma

[1] The violent and relentless persecution of the Uniat Poles in the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander III by the Russians is a notable exception, but it must be said that this persecution was the result of the secular influence of the Government over the Russian Church.

between the Orthodox Eastern Church and the Catholic Church on the one hand and the Anglican Church on the other ? "

I will first take the differences between the Orthodox Eastern Church and the Catholic Church, from which it separated.

We have already seen that when the Eastern and the Western Churches separated in the ninth and eleventh centuries, it was not owing to the growth of a heresy, as in the case of the Nestorians or the Monophysites, but owing to a racial jealousy and rivalry which existed between the East and West, between the Greeks and the Latins. The dogmatic questions in the dispute were obviously only a pretext. " The separation of the Orthodox and Russian Churches," says Sir Charles Eliot, " was based on no intellectual movement, it involved no important religious principle except the quasi-political question of the position of the Pope. It was due simply to the fact that the East inevitably tended to separate from the West, and that no organization, either political or ecclesiastical, could contain two such centres as old and new Rome."

But there was another reason apart from jealousy and rivalry, or rather it was the seed of that jealousy and rivalry which caused the East and the West to drift apart. After the year 800 there was in the West a Pope who was the religious head of the Christian Church, and in Constantinople an Emperor who was the secular head of that Christian Church. The Church qua church (for at that time nobody could conceive the idea of there being more than one church ; for then there existed one church, and, outside of it, heretics) could not recognize or admit the right of any secular head to interfere in matters of doctrine ; and this is precisely what happened in the East. Byzantium secularized the Church, and Russia inherited this secularized legacy.

With regard to questions of dogma, the most important difference in dogma between the two Churches is that to which I have already alluded, of the *Filioque*. This is a purely theological dispute. Rome had merely pushed the definition of the dogma a little further, and had rendered explicit what the East had left vague ; for the Greeks, although they do not admit that the twofold procession can be inserted in the Creed, yet grant that it allows of an Orthodox interpretation. This remains to this day the chief stumbling block, the chief point of difference between the two churches. In the Eastern Church it has come to be regarded as the chief point of the faith. All over the East

people who care nothing about religion and know nothing of theology, are sound on this point, that the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Son.

I will take in order the further points of dogma on which the two Churches differ: after the *Filioque*, another question on which they differ is that of purgatory. The Orthodox pray for the dead, but they conceive their state in another way. The Catholic faith on this subject consists of two articles only: (1) The souls of the just may, after death, still keep some stain of sin; (2) such stain must be expiated by punishment before they go into everlasting happiness. The definition of the Council of Trent (and it contains all the Catholic is bound to believe about purgatory) runs as follows: "There is a purgatory, and souls there detained are helped by the prayers of the faithful, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."

The Orthodox Eastern opinion seems to be that all the dead sleep and wait passively in a middle state until the Day of Judgment. At the same time they believe that prayers, the holy sacrifice, and generous alms must be offered for the dead. In fact, the dogma of the Greeks is less definite. They do not define the state of the souls before they are admitted to a state of beatitude. They reject the idea of the spiritual fire of the Latins, and the idea that souls purify themselves by it. They deny that souls which have departed this life can expiate their faults; or, at least, the only expiation which they admit are the prayers of the faithful and the Holy Mysteries.

They deny the dogma of the Immaculate Conception:[1] the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception being that all mankind are conceived in sin, except the Blessed Virgin, who, by a special privilege and grace of God, through the merits of her Son, was conceived without the stain of original sin. I apologize for repeating this, but I know from experience that nine Englishmen out of ten believe that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is identical with that of the Incarnation of Our Lord. The devotion to the Immaculate Virgin, which culminated in the definition of a Pope in 1854, came to the West from the

[1] Lord Anthimos declared that the "Church of the Seven Councils" had defined that there is only one Immaculate Conception, that of Christ, and that the "Papic Church" defines in opposition the Immaculate Conception of his Blessed Mother as well. The Church of the Seven Councils, that is, the Catholic Church down to 787, defined nothing on this subject at all.

East. The Feast of the Conception[1] of Our Lady came also from the East. Soloviev, in his book on the Russian Church, considers that the denial of this doctrine by the Greek theologians is an example of the negative character of their principles and of their blind acrimony; for their denial of this doctrine, he maintains, is contrary to the manifest belief of the Eastern Church, Greek as well as Russian, which proclaims without ceasing the Holy Virgin to be all immaculate.[2] Besides this, the Easterns reject the Pope's universal supremacy, and they deny the dogma of papal infallibility.[3]

M. Leroy Beaulieu says that of all these differences, ancient and modern, it is only the question of papal infallibility which has any real religious or political importance, because it sums up the differences between the two Churches. *The fact that the Pope can make a religious definition at all contains, in itself, the whole difference between the two Churches.* Catholics, while holding as *de fide* that the revelation made to the Apostles was complete and final, yet admit the possibility of new, explicit definition of the revelation, as is seen in the creeds, as heresies arise, or a fuller expansion of doctrine is demanded. The Orthodox, on the other hand, consider that the time of definition has been closed for all time; they believe that nothing can be added to the decision of the first seven general councils, which contained, according to them, the final and unalterable definition of the Christian faith and the dogmas of the Church.

With regard to the primacy, they deny that the Bishop of Rome has authority over the whole Church; that is to say, they believe what every Catholic learns in his catechism, namely, that the head of the Catholic Church is Jesus Christ, Our Lord. The first seven Councils recognized the Pope as supreme Pontiff

[1] December 9th. It is first mentioned by Eastern theologians: St. Andrew of Crete in 675, St. John Damascene †744; St. Theodore of Studium †826, and others; it is first heard of in the West in the eleventh century.—See Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, p. 107.

[2] "Very Immaculate" or "All Immaculate" (vseneporotchnaia) is the epithet which is habitually added to the name of the Blessed Virgin in our liturgical books, it is translated from the Greek παντάμωμος and other analogous words. —Soloviev, *La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle.*

[3] But they admit the first seven councils to have been *infallible in the definition of dogma*—as infallible as Catholics consider the Pope to be when defining dogma *ex cathedra*. It is my experience that nine Englishmen out of ten consider papal infallibility to be synonymous with Papal impeccability, which, of course, it has nothing to do with.

everywhere, and Patriarch of the West. The Orthodox Church practically acknowledges the Pope as head of the Western Church and legitimate first Patriarch (*primus inter pares*); but rejects his universal claim.

This last point is the only one, says Soloviev, about which the Greek and Russian theologians care. "You know very well," he says, "that the others are only pretexts, but the supreme Pontiff: there is the enemy. All your Orthodoxy, all your Russian 'ideal,' is therefore in reality only a national protest against the universal dominion of the Pope. But a protest *in the name of what?* It is here that the real difficulty of your situation begins. This Protesant hatred of the ecclesiastical monarchy ought, in order to reach the spirit and the heart, to be justified by some great and positive principle. You ought to have something better to put in the place of the theocracy which you disapprove of; but that is just what you cannot do. What sort of ecclesiastical constitution have you which could benefit the peoples of the West? Will you speak to them of Œcumenical Councils? *Medice, cura te ipsum!* Why has the East not convocated a true Œcumenical Council in opposition to that of Trent or to that of the Vatican? . . . As a matter of fact, while the great assemblies of the Church continue to occupy an important position, both with regard to the doctrine and the life of Catholicism, the Christian East, for a thousand years, has been deprived of this important manifestation of the universal Church, and our best theologians (Philaret of Moscow, for instance) admit that it is impossible for the Eastern Church to hold an Œcumenical Council as long as she remains separated from the West."[1]

The chief moral difference between the two Churches can be summed up by saying (*a*) that the Orthodox Eastern Church has remained stationary, and the Catholic Church has kept the door of dogmatic definition open for ever, and is able continuously to employ it; (*b*) the Catholic Church is organized under one supreme head: in the Orthodox Eastern Church there is no living authority before which it is obliged to submit;[2]

[1] V. Soloviev, Professor of Philosophy in St. Petersburg, the author of these words, lived and died in the Orthodox Eastern faith; but he strongly protested against the part played by the State in the Russian Church and warmly advocated reunion with the See of Rome.

[2] *Il n'existe pas de gouvernement vraiment spirituel dans l'église Gréco-Russe*, V. Soloviev. This is, he adds, what gives so much vitality to non-denominational sects in Russia.

(*c*) the Catholic Church is above and beyond the reach of all State authority: the Orthodox Eastern Church, since it lacks a centre of unity, has been forced to acknowledge the independence of the various national churches of which it is composed;[1] the Russian Church was the first to establish its independence: Greece, Servia, and Roumania followed suit. The jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople was bound up with the authority of the Sultans. Georgia and Bessarabia, when they were annexed to Russia, came under the jurisdiction of the Russian Church. The result, therefore, of the Orthodox Church having no spiritual head to represent it on earth, has been that many of its branches have been entirely secularized, and the chief example of this is, as we have seen, the Russian Church.

Respecting the questions on which the two Churches are agreed, one can roughly sum the matter up by saying that with the exception of those points which I have just mentioned, they agree on all other fundamental questions of dogma, although there are slight differences and modifications in their interpretation of them. It will perhaps not be uninteresting to go into the matter a little more explicitly. The Orthodox Church acknowledges the same seven Sacraments or Great Mysteries as the Catholic Church, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, (extreme) Unction, Holy Order, and Matrimony: but there are certain differences in the administration of them. The Orthodox baptize with threefold immersion. Confirmation is administered by the priest immediately after baptism by the Orthodox, and this was so in the West during all the thirteenth century. The practice is still retained by Catholics in the East, by special permission of the Holy See. The general custom in the Catholic Church now is not to confirm such as have not attained the age of reason, or, at least, not unless at the hour of death. The Greek Church agrees with the Church of Rome in holding auricular confession to be indispensable; but the sacrament of penance in the Orthodox Church is more flexible, more rudimentary, and less precise than that of the Church of Rome.[2] There are no confessionals: the priest sits before the

[1] Hence, curious situations arise: for instance, when the Bulgarian Church was made independent, Constantinople shortly afterwards declared it to be schismatic; but Russia never accepted this anathema.

[2] With regard to confession, some English writers state that members of the Orthodox Church have to undergo a severe discipline before obtaining absolu-

Ikonostasis[1] under a holy picture, the penitent kneels before him; then, after several prayers are said, the priest asks the penitent his sins and finally absolves them.

With regard to Transubstantiation there is no difference between the two Churches: the Eastern Church believes in the definite, objective, real presence. They say that the Holy Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ; they believe this literally. They adore the Blessed Sacrament, they reject all explanation of a typical or subjective presence; all Orthodox definitions of this Sacrament coincide with those of the Catholics, nor have they ever attempted to establish a difference on this point. What the Latins call *transubstantiatio* the Greeks call μετουσίωσις (μετά = trans; οὐσία = substantia) and the Russians call *presushchestvlenie*, which is an exact rendering of the Greek. The only difference between the two Churches with regard to this question is that the Orthodox believe that the change takes place not when the words of institution are said, but at the invocation of the Holy Ghost (*Epiklesis*) which follows them, in their Liturgy.

Holy Communion is given to the laity under both kinds: but nobody, except a priest, and the Emperor on the day of his coronation, is allowed to drink out of the chalice. The Sacrament is administered by means of a golden spoon, in which particles of the bread of the Eucharist float in the consecrated wine. Infants receive Holy Communion after baptism, confirmation is only required after the age of seven.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction is called by the Greeks *Euchelaion* and by the Russians *Soborovanie*; that is to say, simply unction without the "extreme." Instead of being administered by one single priest, it is administered by several, if possible by seven, as the Greeks say this is more in consonance with the passage in St. James's Epistle on which this sacrament is based. It is not reserved for those *in extremis*. The Greeks

tion. This does not coincide with the testimony I have myself gathered from members of the Russian Orthodox Church. I have, on the contrary, heard complaints made of the laxity of confession in Russia. I have heard people who told me they no longer went to confession at all, owing to this laxity. M. Leroy Beaulieu writes at length on this subject and lays stress on the flexibility of confession among the Russians, in contradistinction to the stricter interpretation of this sacrament by the Latins. He also points out that among the Old Believers in Russia the sacrament of penance is far more strict.

[1] See p. 345

and Russians consider this sacrament to be less a preparation for death than as a means of healing the sick.[1]

With regard to Holy Order, members of the Orthodox Church, in theory, are in agreement with the Catholics,[2] but in practice they resemble the Protestant churches. No priest in Russia and in Greece is allowed to marry after he has been ordained. He is married before he is ordained, so practically in the East marriage is a necessary preliminary to Order.

With regard to Matrimony the same thing applies; in theory the Orthodox Church holds the Catholic view, in practice the Eastern Church seems to take a middle course between that of Rome and the reformed Churches. Like the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church (both Greek and Russian) regards marriage as a sacrament and proclaims its indissolubility; but in practice it admits (like the Protestants) that the infidelity of one of the parties authorizes separation. The Russian Church considers adultery to be the death of marriage, and that the violation of the conjugal oath annuls the sacrament; it authorizes re-marriage to the injured but not to the guilty party.

The Orthodox have the same fundamental cycle of feasts as the Catholics. Some of their feasts have different names. They have ten service books. In all their churches a great screen, called the *Ikonostasis*, cuts off and hides the sanctuary. The Orthodox use vestments, which correspond more or less to those used by the Catholic Church, but differ in appearance, chiefly from their having no sequence of liturgical colours, and no idea of definite liturgical colour. The holy liturgy of the Eastern Church is said according to two rites (there is also a third, for the Mass of the Presanctified[3] in Lent); the two liturgies in use are those of St. John Chrysostom and of St. Basil. They fast more than the Catholics do: forty days, from November 15th until Christmas Eve, and their Lenten fast begins on the Monday

[1] The idea that the Catholic Church does not confer this sacrament until all hope of the sick man's recovery is over is baseless. One of the objects for which the Catholic Church anoints the sick, expressed in the prayers at the time, is that "the prayers of faith may save the sick man, and the Lord may raise him up."

[2] The Orthodox ordain by laying on one hand only.

[3] The Mass of the Presanctified; the *Missa præsanctificatorum* is really not a Mass at all. There is no consecration; but the priest receives as communion a Host previously consecrated. The Orthodox Church abstains from the celebration of Mass in the proper sense of the word during Lent, except on Saturdays and Sundays, and substitutes for it the Mass of the Presanctified.

after the Sixth Sunday before Easter (Quinquagesima). They do not fast either on Saturdays or on Sundays during this time. A further fast begins on the day after the first Sunday after Pentecost (which is their All Saints' Day), and lasts until June 28th. The fourth fast is that of the Mother of God, which lasts from August 1st to August 14th. The Orthodox fast means only one meal a day, and involves abstinence not only from meat but from butter, milk, cheese, eggs, oil, and fish. Food is cooked with a kind of oil which has a nauseous, rancid taste. The fasts are carried out by the poor in Russia with extraordinary strictness, and even among the richer classes there is far more fasting and abstinence during Lent in Russia than in the countries of Western Europe, but the Lenten fast is the only one which is strictly kept, except by the peasantry. The Eastern Church rejects all statuary images of our Lord or of the saints as idolatrous, but pictures and any image which is represented on a flat surface is allowed.

I will now take the points of agreement and the questions at issue between the Orthodox Eastern Church and the Anglican Church. I have already quoted, on page 331, Sir Charles Eliot's opinion that the separation of the Orthodox and the Russian Churches was based on no intellectual movement. It is for this reason, he says, that the comparison between the Orthodox and the Anglican Churches is historically misleading, although he admits there is an obvious element of truth in the view, since both bodies protest against the claims of the Pope to supremacy. M. Leroy Beaulieu says—and any one who has any first-hand knowledge of the Orthodox Russian Church will confirm his opinion—that all, either Catholics or Protestants, who consider that the attitude of the Orthodox Græco-Russian Church is humble, and almost shamefaced towards its Western antagonists, are under a delusion. The theologians of the East, throned on their fixed and immovable dogma, regard the religious differences of the West with a mixture of pity and contempt. Efforts have been made by Anglicans, and more especially by the *Old Catholics* (those who reject the definitions of the Vatican council of 1870), to bring about a union between the two Churches; but the Orthodox Church has shown no zeal in the matter. The advances have always come from the West. In the sixteenth century the Lutherans attempted to obtain the sanction of the

Patriarchate of Constantinople for the confession of Augsburg; and many Anglicans have made efforts in the direction of a reunion of the two Churches. A friend of Newman's, W. Palmer, believed that the Orthodox and the Anglican doctrines were almost identical; and he wished to be received into the Orthodox Church. He went to Russia and to Turkey in order to ascertain how this could be done. At St. Petersburg and at Moscow he was told that all he had to do would be to abjure the errors of Protestantism to a priest, who would administer to him the sacrament of Confirmation. But at Constantinople he was told that he would have to be baptized again.[1] As he knew he was a Christian, and had no reason to suspect the validity of his baptism (Anglican baptism being recognized by the Russian Orthodox Church), he considered that it would be a sacrilege to be baptized twice. On the other hand, he could not make up his mind to enter the Orthodox Church according to the special rules of the Russian Church, because, in that case, he would only be Orthodox in Russia, and would still be a pagan in the eyes of the Greeks. He did not want to belong to a National Church: he wanted to belong to the Universal Church. Nobody could solve the difficulty, and so he ultimately became a Catholic, and submitted to the supreme authority of Rome.

An incident like this shows that owing to the lack of a central supreme authority in the Orthodox Church, it is difficult for that Church to bring about a reunion of other Churches with it. If the Russians treated the Anglicans as orthodox, they might offend the Greeks and the other Orthodox Churches; and there is no central supreme authority which can lay down the law in the matter. The Old Catholics of Switzerland and of Germany have not been more successful. The Orthodox Church has, in the last resort, always shown itself uncompromising towards such efforts of reunion. It is not enough, they say to these *Old Catholics*, to reject the last council of the Vatican; you must also reject ten centuries of Latin tradition.

[1] The Greek Orthodox Church thinks baptism by immersion so necessary that they doubt the validity of any other kind. All the Greek-speaking orthodox re-baptize any convert who comes to them from the Latins or Protestants. But the Russian Church has officially declared that she considers Catholic or Anglican baptism to be valid.—See Fortescue, *Orthodox Eastern Church*, p. 420; Palmer, *Dissertations*, p. 199.

On the other hand, one often meets in Russia both with priests and with laymen who tell you that there is no fundamental obstacle between the union of the Orthodox and the Anglican Churches. For instance, Mr. Pares, in his *Russia and Reform*, tells us of a priest who said to him that there was hardly any difference in dogma between the two Churches, except the *Filioque*. This *obiter dictum* raises many interesting speculations. (*a*) As far as the creeds of the Church are concerned, there is, it is true, no difference between the two Churches, except the *Filioque:* But as far as dogma is concerned, all depends on what are considered to be the recognized tenets of the Anglican Church. Are they the Thirty-nine Articles? In this case, if the Anglican who is desirous of being considered orthodox by the Orthodox Church insisted on adhering to these Articles, the Orthodox Church would certainly not recognize him, because, to give only one instance, the Thirty-nine Articles only acknowledge two Sacraments, and article twenty-eight says that the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten only after a heavenly and spiritual manner, which from the Orthodox point of view is rank heresy. If, on the other hand, the Anglican, who wished to be united to the Eastern Church, were a member of the English Church Union, the Orthodox Church would have the right to ask whether the English Church Union represented the Church of England, acknowledged it, or is acknowledged by it. If, again, he is simply and solely an Anglican who bases his faith on the Anglican Catechism, and who regards the Thirty-nine Articles as a political afterthought, he would still, in the eyes of an Orthodox Russian or Greek, be heretical in the matter of the Sacraments, since the Anglican catechism acknowledges only two Sacraments. When Russians say that there is no obstacle in the way of the reunion of the two Churches, one would be inclined to think either that they had not studied the question, or that they were indifferent to it, were it not for the fact that whenever the question of reunion has been definitely put to them by Anglicans, who were anxious to see it take shape, they have met all such efforts with a civil but none the less uncompromising *non possumus*.

To sum up, the Orthodox Church is a kind of half-way house between the Catholic Church and the Reformed Churches of

Western Europe. In a word, it is Catholic [1] in theory and Protestant in practice. It occupies an intermediate position. In its dogmas and in its rites it is Catholic; in its practical interpretation of dogma, in the position of its clergy, and the scope allowed to individual interpretation and private judgment it inclines towards Protestantism. But the one trait which it has entirely in common with the Anglican Church is that it is a State Church, governed by a lay and political body, although the influence of the authority of the State on the Church is far stronger in Russia than it is in England.

[1] "The faith of the Orthodox Church agrees in the enormous majority of points with that of Catholics . . . a list of differences is liable to falsify one's sense of proportion. In considering what they believe it would be absurd to think of the procession of the Holy Ghost, the questions of the Epiklesis, Purgatory, the Primacy, as the chief points. The foundations of the Orthodox faith are belief in one God in three Persons, in the Incarnation of God the Son, Redemption by the Sacrifice of his life, the Church founded by him with her Sacraments, the Resurrection of the body, and Life everlasting. . . . The Orthodox believe in a visible Church with authority to declare the true faith and to make laws. They have a hierarchy against which our only complaint is that it has lost the top branch; they accept the Deuterocanonical books of Scripture as equal to the others, they believe in and use the same seven Sacraments as we do, they honour and pray to Saints, have a great cult of holy pictures and relics and look with unbounded reverence towards the all-holy Mother of God."—Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, p. 361.

CHAPTER XXVII

RELIGION IN RUSSIA

IN the course of this volume I have already had occasion to note the following facts :—

(*a*) The outward manifestation of religious observance is what will probably, above all other things, strike a man who travels in Russia for the first time.

(*b*) Anybody who gets to know the Russian people at all well, will be struck by the unmistakable evidence of inward religious feeling which they display.

(*c*) Religion in Russia is a part of patriotism. The Russian considers that the man who is not Orthodox is not a Russian. He divides humanity, roughly speaking, into two categories—the Orthodox and the heathen—just as the Greeks divided humanity into Greeks and Barbarians. Not only is the Church of Russia a national church, owing to the large part which the State, the Emperor, and the civil authority play in it, but in Russia religion itself becomes a question of nationality, nationalism, and patriotism.

(*d*) While the mass of the people is intensely religious, the educated professional middle class and the intellectual middle class, as a whole, is completely, frankly, and carelessly atheistic.

(*e*) The Russian is practical and realistic in his interpretation of religion, and conservative in the retention and performance of custom, tradition, ceremonial, and ritual.

These five headings contain, I think, practically all the more important points for discussion in the matter of Russian religion.

(1) I have already dwelt on the large part which the outward manifestation of religious observance plays in Russian life: the abundance of holy images, the shrines at street corners, and in railway stations ; the cabmen stopping to say their prayers in the

street, while driving a fare to the station (a thing which seldom happens in England !), the blending, in general, of religion with everyday life. This is what has struck travellers in Russia in all ages, and this is what still strikes them at the present day. Many people say the Russians are a superstitious and a barbarous people, and pass on. I have tried to point out in chapter v., page 69, why this is not so.

(2) The *national* quality of Russian religion is advantageous to the Church temporal and disadvantageous to the Church spiritual. Owing to the close ties which exist between the temporal and spiritual power, there is no church in Europe which is so strongly protected as the Russian. Nobody attacks the Church. There is no gratuitous anti-clericalism, and even members of the cultivated classes who either disbelieve in religion altogether, or look upon all such matters with scepticism and indifference, continue to regard the Church with sympathy and affection, although so far from respecting her doctrines and teaching, they may possibly despise them and laugh at them. The Church binds the Russian people together; even those who have ceased to believe in her. The attitude even of the disbeliever is that of a grown-up son towards his old grandmother. He no longer believes that the fairy tales she told him are true, but he loves them nevertheless, because they were told him by his grandmother, and he loves his grandmother on account of the fairy tales. M. Leroy Beaulieu sums up the matter thus: After having said that the Church and the Fatherland are intimately linked in the eyes of Russians, he adds that the Russian who dares to repudiate the worship of his ancestors is stigmatized less as an apostate than as a traitor to his country, because the Church for them is a Russian thing: it is above all things a national institution; the most ancient and, in spite of everything, the most popular of all national institutions. For not only has the Church largely shared in the building up of the nation, but, even at the present day, it is still the cement of the national fabric. Thus it is, that all national and patriotic movements in Russia have a religious basis. In the Crimean War, and in the War of 1878, the Russian people considered that they were fighting for the orthodox against the Moslems and the heathen.

The disadvantages inherent in this state of affairs are those which are bound to arise from the interference of the civil element

and the State with religion. That which is a gain for patriotism is an immense loss for religion.

"The Orthodox communion in Russia," says Sir Charles Eliot, "has always combined Christianity and patriotism, and consequently been able to lead the whole nation." A little farther on he adds, "'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and the fruits of the Orthodox Church lack spirituality. She has quickened neither the moral sense nor the intelligence of her followers."[1]

The fault proceeds from the quality. As soon as the Church in any country comes to be regarded simply and solely as the hall-mark of patriotism, it must inevitably lose its spiritual importance, and end in stagnation. This is why the Russians, being by nature intensely religious, are so often dissatisfied with the religion which is provided for them by the Church and her ministers, and are led to strike out a line for themselves and to found sects. There is no country in the world where sects have played so large a part as in Russia, and where sects have had so strange and so violent a character. M. Leroy Beaulieu devotes eleven long chapters to the study of the Russian sects.

In the first place there is what is called the Schism, in Russian, *Raskol*, which is neither a sect nor a group of sects, but a collection of doctrines, often various and contradictory, which have no further bond than their common antagonism to the official Orthodox Church. The Schism, as we have already seen, originally arose in the seventeenth century when Nikon, the Patriarch of Moscow, revised the liturgical books. There are 25,000,000 Russians who live in schism from the established Church. The only changes that Nikon made, besides the revision of the texts, were, as we have seen, one or two trifling details of ritual in the liturgy; but these trifling changes were sufficient to convulse Russia.

Those who refused to accept Nikon's reforms, suspecting them of being the thin edge of the wedge of foreign influence, called themselves "Old Believers." When Peter the Great

[1] This is confirmed by V. Soloviev. "'C'est par leurs fruits que vous les connaîtrez.' Dans le domaine de la société religieuse, le fruit du catholicisme pour ceux qui sont restés catholiques, est l'unité et la liberté de l'Eglise; le fruit du protestantisme oriental et occidental pour ceux qui y ont adhéres,—c'est la division et la servitude."—V. Soloviev, p. 157.

came to the throne, and made the opening of Russia to foreign influence, the cardinal note of his policy, the schism became more than a theological revolt: it grew into a social and civil rebellion. The ranks of the discontented who opposed the liturgical change introduced by Nikon were swelled by those who resented the political changes introduced by Peter the Great. The *Raskol* became a protest against the foreigner. They bitterly resented the changes he insisted on introducing into their immemorial habits and customs; changes which affected their dress, their beards even (which they had to shave), the alphabet and the calendar. They were conscientiously opposed to all the new machinery of Peter's administrative bureaucracy: such as the census and the capitation tax. The only explanation they could find for Peter the Great's success was that he was the Antichrist, and that the end of the world was at hand. The innate conservatism of the Russian people, when, as in the case of the Old Believers and the Schismatics, it is mingled with religious principle, develops an invincible obstinacy, and persecution increased it tenfold. The Raskolniks split into two factions: the "priestly" and the "priestless" (the "*popovtsi*" and the "*bezpopovtsi*"). The "priestly," that is to say those who still wished to have a clergy, were obliged to manage as best they could with such priests as joined them from the Established Church. They differ now from the Orthodox only in the matter of Nikon's changes; about a million of them have joined the State Church as Uniats (*Edinovertzi*). They have about two hundred and forty-four churches. The "priestless," on the other hand, were fatally led into the most fantastic extravagance; since by dispensing with priests they dispensed with the Sacrament of Order, and as soon as they lost the Sacrament of Order they necessarily lost all the Sacraments administered by priests, with the exception of Baptism. Thus, in order to retain the signing of the cross with two fingers, and a double alleluia, they were forced to reject the Sacraments which were the whole foundation of their Christian life. Their obstinate conservatism made them the prey of the most fantastic and even abnormal novelties. Out of these "priestless" Raskolniks, a multitude of sects sprang. They were persecuted until religious tolerance was proclaimed in Russia a few years ago, and persecution produced in them a desperate fanaticism.

Among them was the sect known as the Slayers of Children (*Dietoubitsi*), who considered it their duty to send the innocent souls of the new-born straight to Heaven.

Another sect were the Suffocaters (*Dushilshchiki*), who considered that it was their duty to preserve their parents and friends from a natural end, and to hasten it when they are seriously ill by suffocating them. They base themselves on the literal interpretation of the text in the gospel, "The Kingdom of God is taken by storm."

There were also the *Filipovtsi*, whose gospel was suicide; sometimes by hunger, and sometimes by fire. In the eighteenth century often whole families and villages would barricade themselves in order to starve themselves to death. In the reign of Alexander II there was the case of a peasant who persuaded twenty other peasants to retire into the forests of Perm and to starve to death.

Then there are the *Molchalniki*, who never speak. There are the *Khlysti*, who believe that in 1645 God the Father came down in a chariot of fire and was incarnate in a peasant called *Filipov*. There are the *Skoptsi*, who practise self-mutilation.

Besides these sects, whose tenets take the shape of violent extravagance, there are others that have a Protestant and rationalist character. Among these are the *Dukhobortsi*, who believe in the reincarnation of our Lord, and who fled to Canada in 1898; the *Molokani*, or drinkers of milk; the *Molokani* as well as the *Dukhobortsi* reject the traditional forms of worship as being a kind of idolatry. They acknowledge no clergy and no master but Christ. The meetings of the *Molokani* are presided over by an Elder. They meet together to read the Scriptures, to sing psalms, and to break bread. Besides these there are the *Stundists*, an offshoot of Western Protestantism. The *Stundists* grew up near Odessa, where there have been German Lutheran colonies for several generations. They have taken their tenets from the German colonists. They also are presided over by an Elder, and their service consists in singing the Psalms and in reading the Bible, and in disregarding exterior forms of worship.

There are also the *Radstockists* or *Pashkovists*; that is to say, the followers of Lord Radstock, who went to St. Petersburg in 1878–9, and carried on a revival in St. Petersburg society,

by preaching an evangelical doctrine, based on the justification by faith. As long as the propaganda was confined to society nobody interfered with it, but when it began to reach the people, the head of the Synod took steps to check it.

The *Irvingites* have also a small group of followers in Russia.

The Russian of the lower class is bound to get his religion somehow. The majority of the people find it in their Church. They are simply Orthodox, and if you ask them what it meant to be Orthodox they would say it meant this: to be baptized, to wear a cross round your neck, or a holy image, to pray to the most Immaculate Virgin, and to all the saints pictured by the images and relics; not to work on holidays; to fast according to tradition; to venerate Bishops; to go to the Sacraments and to Divine Service. That is the Orthodoxy of the people. There are two things which, owing to the nature of the case, are likely to interfere with this: (*a*) the interference of the State; (*b*) the lack of spiritual authority in the Church itself and the consequent laxity of its ministers.

(*a*) With regard to official interference: all minor public servants and soldiers, when they go to confession, receive a ticket from the verger to say that they have received absolution; and the pope keeps a list of those who go to communion. Every year the lists of the parishes are sent to the Bishops and those of the diocese to the Holy Synod; and the Procurator makes a report on it to the Bishop. The people who do not go to communion incur the risk of being considered politically unsound; in order to avoid this, people will often get a ticket or have their name inscribed on the list without performing the act, by the payment of a small sum. This is what Russians mean when they sometimes speak of their religion being *une religion de gens d'armes.* Thus it sometimes happens that the peasant, being aware of the interference of the State in matters which regard his personal conscience alone, will be inclined to think that the whole business of the Church is merely a police manœuvre. Once, a peasant, a baker, who was a member of the first Duma, asked me if there was another version of the Scriptures besides the official Russian version. He could not believe that the Bible in English and in other languages was the same as in Russian; he considered that a special version had been prepared by the

Government for the Russian people, and he thought that the idea of religion and God, as taught to the Russian people, and the whole machinery of the Church, were part of a great official lie. When Russians feel and resent the interference of the State in matters of religion they generally take one of two lines: if they are naturally religious they will join a sect (if they are extremely fanatical they will, perhaps, found a sect); if they are indifferent in matters of religion, they will adopt a matter-of-fact atheism and perform their religious duties, as a matter of form, but with meticulous care.

(*b*) The lack of spiritual authority in the Church itself, and the laxity of conduct which is often manifest in its ministers, that is to say, in the character and behaviour of the priests, have often, in the case of the peasants, had the effect of leading them to distrust the Church. The idea that the priests are, in general, cheats and deceivers is largely prevalent; and a soldier once in order to explain to me what a priest was, thinking I did not know, said, "You know—a man who always lies." And once in the south of Russia, in a railway carriage, I heard some soldiers discussing religion with a monk, and they attacked him on this ground; they said, "The Church says there is only one religion, but that is a lie, because we know there are a dozen other religions, and that the people who belong to them worship God, and are just as good as we are. Therefore, all priests are liars." In any case they regard the priest merely as a vehicle, and rarely as one who is to be revered personally on account of his sacred office. They entirely dissociate the office and the man. The best instance of this which I know is an incident which I related in a book called *Russian Essays and Stories*, where a soldier boasted of having dragged a priest drunk from his bed in order to say Mass. "We said to him," the soldier said, "'Say Mass, you beast': and he said Mass!"

The peasant, and more especially the artisan, who acquires a certain amount of education will not infrequently boast of atheism as a mark of superior education and culture. He will say, "I am a Social Democrat, and, like all educated people, I don't believe in all that nonsense of God, religion, and church."

Here we come to the point which I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter under heading (*d*), namely, the widespread and

intense atheism of the professional classes. The contrast between the atheism of the intellectuals and the religion of the masses is one of the most striking facts in Russia at the present day. "Nowhere," says M. Leroy Beaulieu—and what he wrote in 1889 is just as true to-day—" has religion so great and at the same time so small an influence."

The two classes seem to belong to two different worlds in matters of religion: the intellectuals seem to have absorbed the scepticism of the eighteenth century and the negative German philosophy of the beginning of the nineteenth century, and to have remained at that stage. The people seem to be still in the Middle Ages and in the days of the Crusades. But even the Intellectuals have had to find expression somehow or other for their innate tendency towards mysticism. One generation found it in nihilism, another generation found it in various political creeds, or in being simply revolutionary. The great mistake of the intellectuals in the past has been in thinking they had only to spread their negative ideas among the people for the people to accept them with joy, and to embrace them as brothers. As I have already said, they left out of account the supremely important fact that the ordinary Russian of the people has and will always have a religion of his own, based not on theory, but on experience, which proceeds from his life, and which is the working hypothesis of his existence.

To sum up, I suggest the following conclusions. The great mass of the Russians will always believe in God; their religion is based on common sense and experience. In order to express it and to practise it, they will either be satisfied with what their Church gives them, or they will express their dissatisfaction with their Church by founding or belonging to a sect. The mass of the intellectuals, in spite of certain tendencies towards mysticism, are dogmatically atheistic. As long as this lasts, they will have no chance of influencing the popular masses. The secularization of the Church is largely responsible for the growth of sects among the people and for the spread of atheism among the intellectuals, because it had weakened and deadened the spiritual authority of the Church.

Further, owing to the conservative element in the Russian nature, which is especially manifest as far as customs and conditions are concerned, the Russian of the lower class, whether

religious or not, will cling fanatically to the observance of ceremonial and ritual which has been handed down to him from his forefathers. Finally, and apart from all this, religion in Russia, as I have tried to point out, whether believed or not, will always remain a part of patriotism; and as long as there is a Russian nation there will be a Russian religion at the core of it.

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